

THE
MYSTERIOUS WARNING,
A GERMAN TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF
VOLUNTARY EXILE, &c.

----- "Thus conscience
Can make towards of us all."

VOL. IV.

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BY MISS TAYLOR

AUTHOR OF

VOYAGEUR TALE, &c.



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MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

CHAP. I.

THE young Baron Reiberg was admitted without any difficulty to see Ferdinand, but he was excessively shocked on entering the wretched hole of his confinement, though informed it was one of the best rooms in the prison. "One of the best" could not reconcile it to his feelings, and when he embraced the prisoner, his emotions were very visible.

" I thank you most cordially (said the latter) for this kindness ; but, my good friend, do not throw your eyes around thus, with such a revolting kind of horror in your features. A prison is not a desirable place I grant ye, but is disarmed of all its terrors when conscious innocence brightens the gloom. *You* know I have no cause for apprehension, this temporary confinement therefore, is only a little variety in the chequered work of life."

" I am rejoiced (said Reiberg) to find your mind is cheerful in this horrid place ; in similar circumstances I am sensible that I should possess neither your resignation or fortitude : However, I think your confinement will be of short duration. My father and the Count are gone earnestly to work, and I am certain will not give over until they have obtained your enlargement. I came here, I hope, to bring you some consolation, to bring you letters from your friends, that you have so much wished for."

Ferdinand

Ferdinand eagerly took the letters, looking on the superscription, and then on the seal. "This black herald (said he) forebodes no good news I fear; but the worst *must* be known, and no place so proper as a prison to bear sorrow, or teach patience under unavoidable evils."

He had turned the letter two or three times whilst speaking, irresolute how to open it.—Reiberg observed his embarrassment: "Do you wish to be alone? (said he.) Speak, I will retire, and come to you by and bye."

"No (replied Ferdinand) for my own sake I do not wish it; but perhaps —."

"Say no more (interrupted Reiberg) peruse your letters, I have a book in my pocket." The other obeyed, and with a trembling hand broke the seal.

"It is from Mr. Dunloff (exclaimed he) the guardian of my son! Ah! what am I to hear? Thank Heaven, my child is well." — Reading further on, he again cried out, — "How, Claudina dead! Poor, poor Clau-

blow

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dina!

dina! then I have indeed lost thee for ever!" He continued to read, his emotions increased, the big drops fell on his face, he turned from the Baron, and leaning against the wall, — "Excuse me (said he, falteringly) I have lost a wife, once dear to my heart!"

Attempting to read on, but being too greatly affected at the moment, "My dear Baron (said he) I avail myself of your considerate kindness. An hour or two hence I shall be better enabled to thank you for this visit."—Reiberg immediately withdrew, trusting on his return to bring an order for his enlargement. Ferdinand, at liberty to indulge the sorrow that oppressed him, read the following letter from Mr. Dunloff:

"Let not the black wax too much alarm you, Sir, your son, my amiable pupil, is well: My good old uncle is also well as a man can be, who is ready to expire with joy, on receiving intelligence so little hoped for and unexpected; but — your Lady, Madam Claudina, who had retired from the world,

world, who was before dead to her friends, is now released from all her cares, and is happy, I trust, in Heaven!

“This event ought not, Sir, to afflict you. My uncle and myself attended her; with him she was some time alone, but before *both* she confessed herself unworthy of your affection, that she had deceived and injured you. She lamented most bitterly your supposed death, the report of which I believe accelerated her's, because she accused herself as the primary cause of all your misfortunes. Not to dwell on this melancholy subject, she died a true penitent, entreating mercy for her offences, and imploring blessings on her dear child, who had long before mourned the loss of his mamma, and was therefore spared any further concern.

“My uncle, who is confined to his bed with the gout, orders me to express his transports of joy for your health and safety. — The letters which conveyed the intelligence of *your* death had nearly deprived *him* of life,

and brought on that disorder which has hung upon him ever since. He hopes you will condescend to write to him once more before your return, that he may know *where to attend you*. He has not seen the Count, his master, since your letters arrived, but hears they have caused more *surprise* than *pleasure*; of that you will have a circumstantial account hereafter."

Mr. Dunloff concluded his letter with "praises of his young pupil, whose docility and good disposition gave promise of much future satisfaction to his father. His little daughter, whose delicate health would be most considerately attended to by his uncle and himself, was placed with a very worthy woman within a few doors of his own residence, and was visited by him daily. He conjured Ferdinand to divest himself of all anxiety for the health and safety of his children, and rely on his watchful care for the preservation of both."

When

When Ferdinand had recovered from the first shock naturally felt on hearing a woman he once adored was no more, when he had acquired composure sufficient to peruse the letter through, indignation kept pace with sorrow.

Claudina's last confession had confirmed the implied guilt frequently insinuated, but of which he never could have thought her capable; he revolved in his mind the whole tenor of her conduct; he saw nothing wrong, nothing reprehensible, in word or action, before their removal to Renaud Castle: *There* then she must have met with the object that seduced her from her duty to him and herself; but among all his brother's visitors, there was no particular man to whose artifices he could attribute the misfortune that so deeply wounded him. Lost in conjecture, he saw only that the fact was certain, and from Ernest only he could hope to have the mystery elucidated. He grieved for the unhappy Claudina, and from his soul forgave a crime

which her subsequent conduct proved she deeply and sincerely repented of.

“ This then (said he) is the termination of an union formed in disobedience, pursued with rashness, which entailed upon me the curses of a parent, brought misery and guilt on her, sorrow, shame, and unavailing repentance, on the wretched Ferdinand !”

He remained for near three hours overwhelmed with the most painful reflections, and entirely forgetful of the other letter which he had put into his pocket. At length the remembrance of his brother made him start from his reverie, recollect the letter, and hastily search for it. The superscription was Count Rhodophil's. He tore it open ; it was not a long one.

The Count expressed more surprise than Ferdinand thought needful ; the joy was more reserved : He *said*, “ that he was delighted to lay aside his mourning, and rejoice in the restoration of a brother ;” but he wrote it as if he did not *feel* it ; there was an air of constraint ;

straint; the expressions seemed not the genuine feelings of the heart, but the laboured sentiments of a man fearful he should not say *enough*, and therefore ran into the contrary extreme, and said *too much*; at least so it appeared to Ferdinand.

“ Ah! (thought he) all this eloquence breathes not the air of sincerity, which glows in the simple words of nature, uttered by Ernest through his nephew’s pen. The farther he read the more he was dissatisfied, and when he had finished the letter he was thoroughly disgusted, and yet knew not well of what to complain.

“ Whether it is ill-humour, prejudice, or the effects of a distempered mind, I know not (said he;) but certainly this letter does not please me. He mentions the death of Claudina too so slightly, and with such little concern, that it is not decent, and of his own Lady he is entirely silent.”

Revolving on those things which appeared so strange and unnatural, he had fallen into

a deep dejection, from which he was roused by the entrance of the Baron, and his friend Count M——, who warmly embraced and congratulated him on his liberty.

“ Liberty !” repeated Ferdinand, surprised.

“ Yes,” said the Baron, “ we have succeeded in obtaining your freedom on our parole of honour. The accusation of an insignificant person like Heli, without he can adduce proofs to substantiate his charge, is not sufficient to weigh against a man of your birth and merit; but as all accusations claim attention from justice, though your innocence is not questioned, yet, for the due observance of form, we were obliged to be answerable for your appearance.”

Ferdinand warmly thanked his generous friends, and preparing to leave the prison, asked after the young Baron.

“ He is gone to Heli’s (answered the Count) as we wish to know what is transacting there, and whether he still persists in the false story he has promulgated.”

They

They saw the dejection that clouded the countenance of Ferdinand, but avoided appearing to notice it, and exerted themselves to amuse his mind in the way to the Baron's house, where, on their arrival, he was left alone with the Count, who gave him an account of their proceedings, and also the contents of the two letters he had received. Ferdinand was equally as communicative, and in the Count's friendly sympathy found some alleviation to his sorrows.

The late occurrences had rendered them forgetful of Louisa, and they proposed calling on her in the evening. Young Reiberg was not yet returned, and they began to grow uneasy at his absence, when the Baron was informed a Gentleman requested to speak with him; his name D'Alenberg.

They started with joy, the Baron hastened to the library where the servant had conducted him, and very soon returned, introducing him to the Count and Ferdinand. They flew to welcome him.

“I am at a loss for words (said the friendly Gentleman) to express the unexpected pleasure of this meeting : I came here under the most painful inquietude ; two words from this Gentleman (pointing to the Baron) has almost intoxicated me with joy.”

The two friends congratulated themselves on this agreeable meeting ; the Count eagerly inquired after Miss D’Alenberg.

“Poor Theresa (answered he) has suffered much, a disorder on her spirits, a nervous affection the doctors term it. The strange adventures which beset Louisa did not tend to lessen it ; but the letters we received from her and you gave a sudden and uncommon turn, a flow of spirits, such as I could scarcely have expected.

“We lost no time in setting off for Vienna, and arrived safely this morning ; but had hardly time to embrace our young friend, when the doctor entered with a story that threw my poor invalids into a very terrible situation, no other than that Count

M—

M—— and Count Ferdinand had been accused of robbery and murder, were taken up, and confined in a prison. This relation, of which the doctor could not foresee the sad effects, gave me more exquisite pain than any I had ever experienced: The anxiety I have felt for some hours cannot be described; I came here under the apprehension of hearing the fatal certainty of the doctor's report. How little did I expect to see you both!"

"Indeed, Sir (said Ferdinand) we are much indebted to you for the kind solicitude you express, but there has been but too much truth in the story you heard."

"Well, well (cried Mr. D'Alenberg) I have not time to hear the explanation at present; it is sufficient that I see you safe; I must fly back to remove the anxiety of my daughter and Louisa."

"May we not be permitted to wait upon the Ladies?" asked the Count.

"Not this evening (answered she;) the journey has fatigued Theresa, and she has been

been thrown into great agitations on *your* account. Early in the morning I will see you again. The Baron invited him to breakfast, and he promised to attend them."

The friends were exceedingly pleased at the arrival of Mr. D'Alenberg, and promised to themselves a speedy termination of an affair so injurious to Ferdinand, from the concurrent testimony of him and Louisa, in his favour; as her account would develop the design of Count Wolfran in forcing his way into Heli's house, and the elopement of Fatima the preceding day with the Count, naturally accounted for the fatal effects that followed his intrusion; for the rest, conceiving that he had lost Louisa through her knowledge of Ferdinand, and feeling himself deceived and abandoned by the person he had acknowledged as a sister, Heli had, from mere malice and revenge, accused Ferdinand of crimes he could not for a moment think him really guilty of. As to the robbery, their suspicions fell on the attendants of the Count,

as

as the two Barons could prove Ferdinand was in their house during the whole transaction.

On a review of these circumstances they concluded the false accusations would be unquestionably proved, and Heli, if he lived, meet the punishment his baseness truly deserved. The Baron was just beginning to express some anxiety for the safety of his son, when he entered the room.

"Your looks are full of importance," said the Baron.

"They are a transcript of my mind then, (answered he) for I promise you that I have not been idle since my departure from you this morning; I shall therefore wave my congratulations to Ferdinand, and relate to you my proceedings.

I repaired without delay to Heli's cottage, most fortunately I met one of our servants, and took him with me. When arrived there I was admitted by one of the men who guarded Heli, who told me that he was so much better, they intended to remove him to the prison.

I went up to him; he preserved the same fullen silence, and as I could not make him understand me, I desired the interpreter to inform him, "that his malice had proved ineffectual to hurt Ferdinand, whose innocence of his charges had been satisfactorily proved by my father and his friends; but that the murder of the Count would bear hard upon *him*, as not a single person knew *him*, or could he adduce any circumstances in his favour that would tend to invalidate the proofs against him, for no one would credit a story so absurd, as that *Count Wolfran* intended to rob his house, whatever were the motives that brought him there."—The interpreter repeated my words; he answered him with fury in his looks, and a kind of desperation in his air that shocked me. The answer was explained to me thus: "That he cursed Ferdinand, Fatima, and the Count, and to the former attributed all his misfortunes; for Fatima would have been faithful, had she never known him as a brother, and the

the other woman (meaning Louisa) might have consoled him for *her* loss, had not that "Christian dog" forced himself into her company, and contrived to get her away; for *all* which he never would forgive him, nor cease to pray that his prophet Mahomet might destroy him.

As for himself, he despised all threats, and laughed at their menaces, for they could not hurt him."

He was then told, "that he was to be conveyed to a prison, and that his trial would prove the innocence of Ferdinand, as Louisa could declare in his favour by an account of the circumstances of the preceding day, when he had insulted Count Wolfran, and Fatima voluntarily eloped with him."

This intelligence threw him into a violent rage: "I have lost my jewels, lost the woman I loved, another torn from me, am wounded, and insulted; to serve those Christian dogs I have suffered all this! and shall I have no revenge? Great Prophet, avenge
thy

thy servant! Shall I prove the innocence of Ferdinand? No, he and his sister have been my ruin!"

He gnashed his teeth with fury, and doubtless had any weapon been at hand he would have destroyed himself; but at this instant was heard a knocking at the door; it was opened; a man entered, who seemed confused at seeing so many persons, and inclined to retreat; but Heli immediately exclaimed, "That is one of the villains," and the interpreter seized him.

My servant exclaimed, "How, Sancho!"

"Sir (said he to me) this man I well remember; he was discharged from my late master's service for some dishonest practices, and enlisted himself in the army; It is now four years since he left Vienna as a soldier."

"What is your business here?" demanded I, pretty sternly.

"Sir (said he) I will to you make a free confession of some very particular circumstances, if you will pledge your honour to
save

save me from punishment ; without that assurance I am dumb for ever."

" Being dumb, as you term it, will but little avail when this man proves you entered his house to rob and murder him ; but if you are just in your confession, and repent of your crimes, by giving up your accomplices, I will exert my interest to procure you pardon, and you may depend upon my protection."

He was then freed, and entered on the following detail. " After the last battle with the Turks, the regiment he belonged to being disbanded, he sought to enter again into the service of some Nobleman, but his character was too well known at Vienna ; he went therefore to Ratisbon, as he was related to a man who kept an inn there, and who, he thought, might possibly procure him a place.

At this inn he met with, and was hired by, Count Wolfran, who had only a confidential valet with him. The Count was very fond of the Ladies, and had two or three

three mistresses in the city. They lived there for some weeks, when the valet one day told him, they should soon go to a small hunting feat, which his master had near Vienna, and as the summer advanced they should travel.

A few days after this information the valet received a letter, which, he said, would be joyful news to his master. They had several private conferences, and one evening he received orders to pack up the baggage, as they were to leave Ratisbon the following morning. They did so, and arrived at a small village about two miles from the city of Ens; here he was told on no account to mention the name of his master, as they had some private business to transact.

The same evening the Count sent for him, and, after some conversation, promised him a handsome reward if he would assist in securing and carrying off two Ladies who had greatly injured him. The bribe was too considerable to be refused, and he was ordered to watch in a particular part of the city for the

the arrival of some company at a Gentleman's house.

In less than a week, a Gentleman, two Ladies and servants, were seen to alight at the house, which information he conveyed to the Count. He believed the first intention was to attend to their motions, to follow them, and if they could not secure the Ladies whilst they remained in the city, to surround and seize upon them in their road to Vienna.

The Count never walked in the city, only sailed about the river. The day after the arrival of Mr. D'Alenberg, as he was in a boat, he saw the Ladies alone walking on the banks. This suggested to him a possibility of carrying them off by water. He immediately ordered his carriage to be in waiting every evening at a certain distance; the valet, himself and the Count, disguised, were in a boat with two men he had also bribed for his purpose.

He

He little expected to succeed so soon, as the whole scheme depended on seeing the Ladies alone, and no boats on the river to observe him, which might possibly be some time before such an opportunity happened; but, contrary to his expectations, the very next evening they appeared on the banks alone, and walked a considerable way; it grew late, the air was rather cool, and the boats drew off sooner than was customary.

He lost no time, but made towards the shore and landed; the Ladies seemed frightened, and ran back; they pursued them; one had considerably the start of the other; the one behind fell; she was secured; in that moment, when they could soon have overtaken the other, a boat appeared at a distance coming down the river; they were compelled to retreat with only half of their expected prize.

She was carried to the boat, and soon conveyed to the carriage, after which, by cross roads, they arrived at the Count's hunting

ting feat. He understood this Lady was an old mistress of the Count's, who had injured him with another whom he loved. He was highly provoked at not getting the other, but swore to be revenged on this.

What the design was he could not say; the Lady was confined for that night, and they were ordered to be in readiness to travel again: But the next morning all was confusion, the Lady had escaped out of window by a very extraordinary contrivance; the Count was almost raving mad; he ordered the valet and himself to take horses, and attend him through the wood and adjacent villages, and promised a hundred crowns to the person who discovered her.

They stopped at a small house, at the end of the wood, to make inquiries. A Turk came out; it was with difficulty they understood each other. Whilst they were speaking a very beautiful woman came out, and asked, "If they were gallant Gentlemen, who would release a Lady from Turks and Infidels?"—

The

The Count told her, he would die in her service.—The Turk compelled her to go in, and presently they heard her scream, upon which they burst into the house, gave the Turk a drubbing, the Lady ran out, the Count took her on his horse, and they rode with her to his house in the wood.

This Lady pleased him so much that he staid at home with her, only sending the others to make inquiries after the run-away Lady, and he believed might have forgot her, had he not been desirous of revenge, and fearful she would get to her friends.

He understood from the valet, that when the Lady with them found it was not love that induced the Count to seek her, she owned that the person he sought for, was in the Turk's house, and very ill; upon which it was resolved that they should break into his house, confine him and the women servants, and carry off the Lady.

Before this scheme was to be executed, they had prepared every thing for leaving the
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the house in the wood, to embark as soon as possible for Turkey, where they intended to leave the Lady in a strange country, without money or friends, to make her way as she could, and all this trouble was taken to satisfy the Count's revenge.—“He believed, (he said) there was more plots intended than he was informed of, because the Count and the valet were always conferring together.”

However, they all set out two nights after for Heli's, the Turk's Lady waiting at some little distance in the carriage. On breaking into the house, the two women escaped by a back door into the wood. Heli told them the Lady was taken away, but they would not believe him, and proceeded to search the house; he taking up pistols foolishly, threatened them, upon which the valet fired and wounded him; in the same moment *he* fired, and the Count fell, crying he was a dead man.

The valet then said both would die, and they must provide for their own escape; but

first he would have some of the Turk's riches. They opened the drawers and closets. He saw the valet take a small box, which he said belonged to the Lady, and he secured it for her. They found gold and many valuables, which they took, and then hastened to the Lady, telling her what had happened.

She seemed to be much frightened, and asked what they could do? He whispered her, and then said, "It would be better to return to the house for that night, and dismiss the carriage."—The other thought this very strange; but presently the valet told the post-boy to bring the carriage next morning, as his master had met with a friend, and would not go on his journey that night. They entered the house, only one woman servant was there, who supposed them gone, and was surprised at their return. The valet told her the same story he had before said to the post-boy, and then proposed to the other going immediately into the city, hiring a carriage, and to bring it at the first dawning of day
to

to a place in the wood, where they would join him, make the best of their way to the water, get on board a trading vessel, and sail into Turkey.

He, frightened with apprehensions of being discovered, staid not to consider about this strange wild plan; but instantly left them, though on the road his heart misgave him that some way they intended to deceive him; but he went on, called up the people at an inn, and ordered a carriage directly to be ready, resolved to go back in it to the house.

It was some time, however, before he could execute his purpose, and the day began to appear as they drove through the wood.—

He went to the appointed spot, no one was there, and he proceeded to the house. The doors were fastened, he knocked, and at length the servant came down and let him in. He asked if the Lady and Mr. Biffot were ready?—She had not seen them.—He went up stairs, knocked at the Lady's door,

no one answered, he opened it, and found the Lady was gone.

He searched the other apartments, neither of them were in the house, the back door was on the latch, and he supposed they had gone that way. He directly got into the carriage, and returned into the wood, every part of it he searched; where the horses could not penetrate he alighted, and explored every recess, but all was fruitless; he wasted the whole day in examining the wood and its environs, and at length was compelled to dismiss the carriage, and return to the house.

He now thought they had contrived to escape, and leave him to suffer; yet where they could be hid was very extraordinary.— He resolved to go the next morning to all the post-houses, and, describing their persons, find if they had, by any means, got a carriage. This he had done all that morning, and at length it came into his head to call at the Turk's, and by some pretence learn whether the Count and the master of the house were dead or not."

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

"**S**UCH was the relation," continued the young Baron, " which the fellow gave me. Providence, doubtless, conducted him to the house to clear up the strange mystery of the Count's death, otherwise one would have thought the man mad to come there."

This account certainly tended to exculpate Heli from the murder, as it was evident he had been wounded first by persons who broke into his house, and every man, in a situation like his, had an indubitable right to

defend himself. I ordered the interpreter to explain the man's confession to him, and told him, that, as he could now clearly understand Ferdinand was entirely unacquainted and unconnected with the persons who had injured him; he must be convinced that he ought to make the humblest concessions to that gentleman and his friends for the insult offered to him, by imprisoning his person, and aspersing his character; that if he was disposed to behave properly, I would very readily exert *my* interest to serve *him*.

At first, I believe, from the looks that accompanied his words, he was stubborn and very ungracious; but after some conversation, the interpreter told me, he was very sensible of my kindness, and sorry for the injury and trouble he had brought on Mr. Ferdinand. The man who had so fortunately dropped in upon us, I left in custody, assuring him that his confinement should be short, and that I would perform all my promises in his favour.

I left the house at length, and went to the prison ; there I had the pleasure to hear our friend had just been liberated ; from thence I proceeded to the magistrate's, related to him the odd story I have been repeating to you, and requested the man might be brought before him to-morrow. Also, that some inquiry might be set on foot through the city, to discover, if possible, the wretches who have robbed Heli.

"Ah ! my dear Baron," exclaimed Ferdinand, "in that point I cannot wish you success ; consider one of them is but too nearly connected with me by blood. Would to Heaven I could recompense Heli for what he has lost."

"That would be a Quixote generosity," said the Count, "which his malice to you can by no means deserve : If, however, he is stript, I have no objection to join in securing to him a support, that may enable him to spend his days with comfort ; this our own feelings may be gratified in doing ; at the same time that I am persuaded, had he not con-

ceived our company and connexions were necessary for his own convenience, we might have remained in Phillippo, and got free how we could."

"I believe you are right in your conclusion," replied Ferdinand; "but through him we *did obtain* our liberty—and I also owe him obligations for civil treatment and many indulgencies; he therefore shall not *want* in a strange country, while I have the means of preventing it.

"Count Wolfran's character and proceedings is, I think, the strangest medley of follies and inconsistencies I ever heard of; for he was open to detection in every scheme he pursued; and that he carried any plan into execution, appears to me the effect of chance and accident; for there was neither regularity nor decision in any thing he undertook. He is said to have been a very handsome and plausible young man; but surely the most inconsiderate that ever existed, and at an early age, has fallen a sacrifice to his own vices and follies."

"Thank

"Thank Heaven!" said the Count, "that Miss d'Allenberg escaped his villainous designs, and that Louisa was saved from the destruction he threatened to her."

"Again," thought Ferdinand, "I see how it is.—With what earnestness did he inquire of Mr. d'Allenberg for his daughter, and now, with what animation he thanks Heaven in her behalf: The Count is most certainly the object of *her* attachment; and without much penetration, I can see that she has superseded Eugenia in his heart. Yet surely, if I am not greatly mistaken in my judgment, her delicacy will always impede a union with him in his present circumstances.—How unfortunate for both, that such an obstacle should intervene, where both honour and justice must revolt against a single wish to remove it."

As Ferdinand appeared lost in thought, his friends endeavoured to rouse his attention, by talking of the pleasure Louisa must experience in being restored to her friends; and Reiberg naturally reverted to the ill-treatment his adored Countess had experienced

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from a man of such loose principles and absurd conduct.

"Do not think me selfish and ungenerous," said he, "if I bless the hand of Providence that has recalled from the world a man whose exterior advantages were made the passport to the vilest profligacy, and whose heart was so depraved, that a union with an angel could not ensure his constancy."

The Count and Ferdinand looked at each other, and read their reciprocal sentiments.

"Little does he think of the base duplicity to which his admired Theodosia was the sacrifice, and the unfortunate Louisa a willing victim."

Fatigued with the various occurrences of the day, they all retired early to their apartments, and Ferdinand was at liberty to indulge that sorrow which pressed heavily upon his spirits.

Claudina returned to his mind's eye with all that innocence, beauty, and tenderness, which adorned her, when struggling under poverty and affliction. How difficult to be-

lieve,

lieve, that she who had borne every evil with fortitude, who had preserved her honour, when poor and subject to temptation, should, when fortune smiled, when every want and wish was supplied, should fail in the trial, when blest with ease and affluence.

"My absence," said he, "was her ruin; some artful wretch took the advantage of an unguarded moment to destroy her honour and happiness, and to plant thorns in my bosom, which must rankle there for ever."

He more earnestly than ever wished to return into Suabia, and meet with Ernest, Claudina now no more. Surely there could no longer exist reasons for concealing those secrets, known only to that faithful old man, and which had so long tortured him. These uneasy reflections were not the only ones that tormented him: He dreaded the discovery of Fatima, whose association and flight with the late Count's valet, too plainly spoke her guilt, and laid her open to punishment, should they be found; the consequence of which must give him the most painful concern, both as

relative to herself, and the disgrace that an illiberal world might attach to his father's memory, and his own name.

"A too hasty discovery of our connexion, by my imprudence," thought he, "has involved me in this additional labyrinth of vexation: Would to Heaven I could leave Vienna; but I cannot separate from the Count, and I fear he will not be prevailed upon to quit the city, now that Mr. d'Altenberg and his charming daughter reside in it."

Under this variety of inquietude, Ferdinand past the night; and when morning dawned, quitted his bed, languid and unrefreshed: He went down and amused himself in the garden, until the servants were up, and then strolled away towards the suburbs, which were infinitely more pleasant than the city itself. Heedless of time or distance, unmindful of his friends, who would naturally feel anxiety at his absence, he proceeded on till the connexion of the houses were broken, and a few scattered ones of mean appearance, first led him to recollect the extent of ground he had

had gone over: He looked at his watch, and, to his surprise, saw that he had exceeded the breakfast hour already, of course could not return in any time for that refreshment, which, until that moment, he had never thought of.

He drew near to the last house; a woman appeared; he asked could he have any thing to eat; she told him bread and milk he was welcome to; this he accepted, and entered a poor little room to rest. Throwing himself upon a window seat, he accidentally cast his eyes upon the floor, and under a small stool opposite to him, thought there lay something like a seal; he rose, and picked it up: To his infinite astonishment, he beheld a gold seal, with a device upon a white cornelian, which he well remembered Heli had purchased for Fatima a day or two after their arrival at Vienna.—He called to the mistress of the house, and asked if that trinket was her's.

"No, indeed, Sir," said she; "I have no such fine things belongs to me, or Anthony either."

"I

"I found it here," returned Ferdinand.

"Dear me, then it surely must have fell out of the pocket of the lady or gentleman that was here yesterday."

"Very possibly," said Ferdinand,— "Pray who were they?"

"I don't know, indeed, Sir,—it was a very tall lady and a short gentleman, that came here, as you have done. Yesterday morning they had some milk, as you be going to have—then they walked away, and in the afternoon came again—stayed here some time eating bread and fruit; then payed me well—and I have feed no more of them."

The "*very tall lady*" did not answer the figure of Fatima, who, though elegantly formed, was not above the middle size; yet he was confident the seal had been her's.—He asked several questions of the good woman, but could obtain no satisfactory answers.

"Do you think," said he, "that they are in this neighbourhood; for then this trinket might be returned to them?"

"No,

"No, indeed," replied she," eying the seal with a look that implied a wish to retain such a pretty bauble; "but perhaps they may come again; for I heard something about "Pratt's-Grove;" and so likely they be going there to-day, and will call here again, when I shall be sure to give it to them."

"As you please," said Ferdinand, delivering it to her: "'Tis certainly your property, without you see them, or they send for it.— But pray where is "Pratt's-Grove?"

"Why, in the Little Island, Sir, where all the gentry goes to make merry, and walk about."

"And can I go to it from hence?"

"O yes, a little below, to the river's side. You will see a boat, that will take you over."

"Then I will go," resolved Ferdinand, swallowing his milk in haste.

With many courtesies and blessings from the good woman, who was well satisfied with his liberality and her golden toy, he left the house, and followed her direction, which brought

brought him to the banks of the river, where a boat lay conveniently for his purpose. He was soon carried over to the Island, which was indeed a little paradise; the most enchanting walks among groves of fine tall spreading trees, that in some places were almost impervious; then suddenly breaking through small openings, long narrow vistas terminated with some beautiful romantic views, that astonished and delighted the observer.

He wandered about here a considerable time, before he began to reflect that this was the most unlikely place in the world for persons to come who wished to be unnoticed, because it was the resort of much company in fine weather. He began likewise to feel himself fatigued, and incapable of making a tour through all the walks that were cut in this beautiful grove. What then shall I do, thought he; go into one of the buildings to rest myself, or return back? He felt ashamed of the impulse that had brought him to the Island, without considering that its situation,

tion, and the number of persons who made it a place of entertainment, must effectually preclude any concealment.

“ Well then,” said he, “ I will walk to the next building, repose myself for half an hour, and then return.—Some future day, when my mind is more calculated to admire and enjoy the beauties of this delightful spot, I shall be glad to devote more time to it.”

He was now close to the building, and about to enter it, when he thought he heard voices as if disputing ; he stopt.

“ If you can find the means to get off undiscovered, and will go to England, I will accompany you ; but I hate the thoughts of going into Turkey—nor will I go. To remain here many days longer, cannot be done. Had you taken my advice, we had been safe.”

“ What ! to murder the man :—“ No—I’ll have no murder on my conscience.—As to robbing the Turk, I hold it no sin ; for they are all a parcel of free-booters and unbelievers ; yet I may be hanged for it ;—therefore I say, no place so safe as Turkey, where

where we may live in some snug place like a King and a Queen."

"How ridiculous you are! I tell you again, that there you will be plundered by the Turks.—If you are seen to live without employment, they will suppose you rich;—you will be informed against; your head will be off, and your house destroyed in an hour. I have heard enough of their tricks and rogueries—therefore to England I *will* go: If you don't chuse it, let us divide, and do each as we like."

"No, I shan't part with you so; but I am afraid to leave Vienna, because I dare say there's an information against us before now."

"*Against us!* Pray what have I to do with it—I stole nothing; this casket of jewels is my own property."

"The devil it is: Pray how would you have come at it, after running away with the Count?"

At this moment, two gentlemen were seen coming down a vista; a man and a woman darted out from the building, so close upon Eerdinand,

Ferdinand, that they almost threw him backwards. They were staggered, and retreated; for he stood in a narrow path way; the gentlemen were advancing in front; he stepped in after them, and instantly saw that Fatima was in a man's dress, and the man wrapped in a loose robe of her's, with a long cloke and woman's head dress.

She as quickly knew him, and gave a violent scream.

"Be silent," said Ferdinand, or you are undone; you are traced and discovered; if you attend to me, I will preserve you from punishment; but first return to me the casket of jewels which belongs to Heli, who is alive, and out of danger.—The man you seduced to join in the theft, and then deceived, is in my custody; he has discovered all the Count's designs, and your baseness."

The valet, with the weakness that generally attends little minds, when convicted of guilt, fell at Ferdinand's feet.

"Preserve my life, Sir, and I will give up every ———."

"Poor

"Poor despicable wretch!" exclaimed Fatima, "*thy* life is not worth saving!" You may do with *me*, Sir, as you please; you are *my brother*; it will be honourable for you to deliver *your sister* into the hands of justice; but be assured, whilst I have life, I will retain my jewels; jewels which Heli plundered me of, when he basely broke into the women's tents, rifled our baggage, and carried me off; these jewels were my property, and I will swear to it."

Ferdinand stood thunder-struck at her unparalleled effrontery; she saw her advantage, and pursued it.

"There are persons coming," said she;—take your choice: Suffer me to leave you instantly, without discovery or pursuit; or if you insult, detain, or give me up, I will immediately declare my affinity to you, claim the late Count Renaud as my father, protest he was married to my mother, commence a process against you for his fortune, and accuse *you* as an accomplice in urging me to regain my own diamonds."

The

The gentlemen were now pretty near to them; she turned to Ferdinand—"One word of discovery, and you are ruined."—She walked out; the gentlemen past, and she followed them pretty closely. The valet was silent, though dreadfully agitated. Ferdinand kept his eyes fixed on her as long as she remained in sight, with so much mute surprise, such horror and astonishment, that it took from him all power of speech or motion for some minutes.

Recovering at length, when she was lost to his view—"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "is it possible that *woman*, so soft, so lovely, so interesting in her gentleness, can, by vice and profligacy of manners, attain to such a degree of boldness and impudent bravery, as would shame the most hardened of mankind!

"For you, said he, turning to the trembling valet—you who have profited nothing by your crimes, I know not that your conviction could afford any satisfaction to Heli, without the recovery of his property; tho' guilty of many base actions, you scrupled at murder,

murder, which I heard that wretch who has left us upbraid you for; and I am even tempted to think the robbery was more the impulse of the moment, from the existing circumstances, which you could not foresee, than a premeditated design.

"If you can repent, perhaps you may find friends; follow me, however, I must dodge that woman."

The man obeyed, and gathering up his robes, looked with conscious shame on his drels, now that he was discovered: They walked quick, and soon came in sight of Fatima, who was then walking with her two beaus towards one part of the Island, where lay a small pleasure-boat;—to Ferdinand's infinite astonishment, one of the gentlemen *banded her in.*

"How," cried he, "has she confessed her sex; or have they penetrated through the disguise?"

The boat put off, and he remained fixed to the spot.

"Well,"

"Well," said he, resuming his recollection, "had this woman's conduct been represented to me by another, I should either have believed it fabulous, or very greatly exaggerated: What a strange adventure have I made of my morning's ramble?"

He then turned, deeply musing, and so entirely forgetful of the valet, that had the man been possessed of a weapon, or any evil designs, he might have had cause to have repented of his carelessness.

But fortunately weapon he had none, and therefore had no temptation to commit an injury, which we know not, desperate as his situation seemed to be, whether he might have had the fortitude or conscience to resist.—For how many are the follies and crimes mankind are drawn into by *opportunity*, to gratify a prevailing passion, which, free from the temptation of the moment, they do not even dream of.

Ferdinand walked slowly back the same way that he came; went into the boat, still followed by the lady valet, whom he very uncourteously

courteously left, to seat himself as he liked, to the no small amusement of the boatmen, who concluded the gentleman and lady had been falling out.

When he was landed, he began to quicken his pace, and in much less time than when he set off in the morning, he arrived at the Baron's house. Great had been the solicitude of his friends; the dejection that marked his countenance, when he retired for the night, his early rising, and unaccountable long absence, were circumstances that gave rise to the most painful conjectures: Mr. d'Allenberg had attended the breakfast table, an invitation that had escaped Ferdinand's recollection, and seemed to be extremely surprised when he found the other did not appear; nor could any reason be assigned by his friends, for an omission that carried with it an air of rudeness and neglect.

The Count saw the dissatisfaction of Mr. d'Allenberg, and in justice to his friend, at length mentioned the account he had recently

ly

ly received of his wife's death, which he said deeply affected him.

"How!" said Mr. d'Allenberg, "is his wife *dead*?"

"She is," replied the Count; "and although, for certain family reasons, they were separated, yet Ferdinand dearly loved her, and tenderly regrets her for the present.—When reason and judgment resume their empire over the heart, I hope he will be sensible of the duties he owes to his child and his friends, nor by unavailing grief, hurt his own peace and wound theirs."

"He has a child, then?"

"Yes, a son placed at an academy in Baden."

"He is a very young father," observed the Baron.—"He married very young, a love match—but not a happy one."

"I understand," said Mr. d'Allenberg—Poor young man; 'tis natural enough that he should feel sorrow on such an event; but I earnestly hope he will not injure his health, nor meet with any accident this morning.—

"I shall look in upon you again by and bye, after paying a few visits, and shall be glad to see him returned."

He did call in again, and was greatly surprised to see the anxiety of his friend's increased; the Count had intended to pay his devoirs to the two ladies; but he was so extremely uneasy concerning Ferdinand, that he felt no inclination to dress or visit.

Baron Reiberg had just determined to send his servants in quest of Ferdinand, when he appeared, followed, as they thought, by a lady, who stooped short at the door, looking down exceedingly confused. The Count had flown to embrace Ferdinand, reproaching him at the same time for giving them so much concern; but he had hardly spoken, when the lady, standing so awkwardly, struck him; he left his friend, and hastily offered his hand to lead her into the room; an offer which, to his great astonishment, she declined, by a low bow.

Ferdinand, who was about to apologize to the Baron, that moment turned his head, and seeing

feeling the surprise of one, and the confusion of the other, with the attitudes of both, tho' he was far from being cheerful, yet the ridiculous situation of the valet, caused him to burst out in a violent laugh, which still more disconcerted the Count, who, bowing to the lady again, came up to Ferdinand.

"For Heaven's sake, what does this mean; who is that—woman?"

"That *woman*," answered he, "has a long story to tell, and is accountable for great part of the time I have been absent.—Suspend your curiosity, however, for a few minutes, and we will return to satisfy it."

He then withdrew, followed still by the lady; the Count and Baron looked at each other for a minute, when the latter exclaimed, laughing heartily,

"Upon my soul, I believe 'tis a fellow disguised."

"A man!" cried the Count; "then indeed, I have made myself ridiculous enough; and now that you have started the idea, I own that I thought she was an odd figure."

"Yet how gallant you was," returned the other: "I with Reiberg had been here, to have shared your politeness."

"Pray be sparing of your jeers," said the Count; "they may be premature.—You are not certain that your conjectures are right."

The Baron, having once entertained the idea, seemed to be every moment more strongly confirmed in his judgment, and rallied the Count most unmercifully on his politeness to the *fair sex*.

In a short time, Ferdinand returned, having equipped the man with an old suit of clothes, that fitted him tolerably.

"Now," said he, smiling, "allow me to introduce the metamorphosed lady as the late Count Wolfran's valet."

"Is it possible," they both cried; "for Heaven's sake, how have you been so fortunate as to meet with him?"

"I know not," replied Ferdinand very gravely, "whether I can deem it as any piece of *good* fortune; for the meeting has been productive

productive of strange scenes, and I am in a very perplexing predicament ; but I will repeat the circumstances to you, and you will be the more competent to advise me. Mean time, permit this man to retire into your kitchen ; when his presence is necessary, I will call him.—“ Go,” said he to the valet, “ keep your own secret, and wait my orders.”

The man bowed, and withdrew.

“ What !” cried the Baron, “ do you permit him to be at liberty ?”

“ Keep your surprise for my story,” answered he, “ and then judge according to the circumstances that will appear before you.”

He then entered upon all the events of the day ; described Fatima’s extraordinary assurance and menaces, and the astonishment that overcame him, and impeded him from making any efforts to stop or to pursue her.

“ Her wickedness,” added he, “ is so complete, that I am confident there is nothing she would leave undone, no perjuries she would scruple at, to be revenged on those who interfere to the prejudice of her schemes. Where,

or with whom she is gone, I know not, or whether I ought to inform Heli of the particulars I have related to you. Have you heard of him to-day; has the Baron produced the servant who made the discoveries?"

"Yes," replied the Count; "the man was carried this morning before the magistrate, and, as his story was partly corroborated by Heli, and many particulars confirmed by Louisa, on whom the magistrate waited to take her information, orders were given to discharge the men who kept Heli in custody: Your innocence was declared, and fresh orders sent forth to search for Fatima and the valet, on account of the robbery.—How they have contrived to hide themselves, and yet venture at a place so public as the pleasurable little Island of Pratt, I can't conceive; but I think it very probable Fatima will be discovered."

"Though she justly deserves punishment," returned Ferdinand, "I must hope she will elude the search.—I am sorry, indeed, she is possessor of the jewels; but she is so profligate

a creature, that I am persuaded she will derive but little benefit from the possession.— Mean time, what is to be done with this valet of the Count's : If he is discovered, we shall not be able to serve him, because his guilt is clearly proved ; yet I think he deserves consideration, for the fellow seems penitent ; followed me without reluctance, and certainly proved, by their conversation, that he had some principle—a conscience that resisted the idea, and was proof against the persuasion of committing a murder.”

“ What you say is very true,” said the Count ; “ and I have other reasons for wishing he may escape punishment ; the story of Count Wolfran will not bear an investigation. Ferdinand took the hint : This fellow had been present at the marriage of Louisa ; had entered into all his master's schemes against her ; the whole would therefore come before the public ; himself and his friends exposed ; the deceit and indignity put upon the Countess would be brought forward, to the mortification of her and young Reiberg. In short,

he saw the most painful consequences would ensue, *should* this man be taken up; and how to aid his escape now, seemed a very difficult affair, without risque or reflection to themselves.

"I think," said the Baron, after a little pause, "I can manage this matter.—The description of his person, with the particular orders for seizing him, can hardly take place 'till to-morrow; I want to send an express to my steward in Bavaria: If he sets off immediately this night with credentials from me, he will precede the orders for his arrest, which are not likely to extend far beyond the city. I will give orders to my steward to employ him upon my estate, to use him well, but to keep a watchful eye upon him 'till my return; what think you of this scheme?"

"Let us hear him," said Ferdinand, and called for *his* servant.—He appeared with a confused and mortified air.—Ferdinand told him of the orders given for his apprehension; explained to him the magnitude of his guilt in the bad actions he had been guilty of, and
privy

privy to, for his late master; and then repeated the Baron's noble and generous offer to preserve him from shame and death:—

“An offer,” said he, “so inconsistent with prudence, in trusting to a reformation of your life, that it must appear wonderful to you, and for which you are indebted solely to a few words I heard you say to Fatima, which makes us hope you are not quite abandoned; and if we can save a guilty being to atone for his past offences, and by penitence and good behaviour, to deserve forgiveness from Heaven, we are willing to run the chance in your favour—What say you?”

“My Lords,” said the man, throwing himself at their feet, “I humbly thank your goodness: I have been a very wicked wretch; I had a very bad master; and I was too ready to obey him, and join in bad actions; but if your Lordships will please to trust me, in return for a life saved, I will devote it to you, and as faithfully obey a good master, as I too well served a wicked one.”

D 5

“Rise,”

"Rise," said the Baron; "your words please me, and I *will* trust you; within two hours you shall set off; I am only apprehensive the servants may recollect his person."

"My Lord," said he, "fearful that I might be known, I have had my handkerchief to my face, complaining of a violent tooth-ache, and only two servants have seen me at all."

"That's well," returned the Baron; "retire to the antichamber, until all is ready.—The Baron bid his servants instantly to get a horse at the door, as he was going to send Mr. Ferdinand's new servant off with an express.—Mean time, among them, they contrived a small parcel of linen; got him boots and a great coat, and being furnished with money for the journey, and letters from the Baron, he was soon on horseback, and lost no time in pursuing his journey; doubtless no less anxious to get beyond the environs of Vienna, than they were to have him."

This

This whole business, from the return of Ferdinand, had been planned and executed in about three hours, and he felt great relief to his mind, and a heavy weight taken from his spirits, when the man was gone.

CHAP. III.

NOW, then," said Ferdinand, "I begin to breathe; and unless Fatima should be apprehended, the preceding circumstances may as well remain untold to Heli."

—His friends were of the same opinion, and then mentioned to him the little resentment Mr. d'Allenberg had expressed, and his subsequent uneasiness.

"I expect him every moment," said the Baron; for I would not send him word of your return, whilst we had so much business in hand; but I am persuaded his anxiety for your safety will bring him here very shortly."

The Baron was right; for in less than a quarter of an hour afterwards, Mr. d'Allenberg was announced. On entering the room, the first object that met his eyes was Ferdinand, who rose to receive him.

"What a truant you are," exclaimed he, embracing him.—"I hope you can well account for your absence, or I know not what punishment you do not deserve, for giving so much uneasiness to your friends."

"A consciousness of *that*," replied Ferdinand, "would be as severe a one as you can wish, since I never yet gave a pain to the bosom of a friend, that did not tenfold wound my own."

"I believe you" returned the other;—"and therefore, without being impertinently inquisitive, or arrogating to myself the power of punishing you, for depriving us of a comfortable

fortable breakfast, I shall only say that I am glad to see you returned in safety."

"Most cordially, Sir, I thank you; but I should ill deserve your indulgence, if I held any reserves to you."

He then briefly recapitulated the events which had happened, down to the conclusion of them, just before Mr. d'Allenberg had entered the house.

"*This* has indeed been a busy day," said that gentleman; "for the young Baron has had an infinity of perplexities on his hands to procure Heli's freedom, and the grant of an indulgence to the man who made a confession."

"He is under a gentle restraint at present; and if, at the expiration of three weeks, Fa-tima and the Count's valet cannot be found, he is to have his liberty, when the Baron has promised to provide for him; though, for my own part, continued Mr. d'Allenberg, I think it is shewing too much indulgence to vice, to set them on a footing with honest men."

"Not

“Not if they *repent*, my dear Sir,” said Ferdinand; “you will allow it possible, I hope, that a wicked person *may*, from conviction, *repent* of his crimes; and if the world is merciless, if no good humane man holds out a hand to help the humble and contrite spirit; if they are shunned, reprobated, and despised, where can they seek for shelter, from the sting of conscience, and the scorn of the world? Desperate, wretched and undone; renounced by the *good*, they are driven—they are compelled to return to the society of the *wicked*.—Hopeless, enraged, and disappointed, a hundred to one but they grow more wicked, more abandoned, than in their first career; and are lost, perhaps, body and soul, because the too fastidious, or uncharitable *good* man, conceives it an abomination to shew mercy to the sinner, or stretch forth his hand to drag him from the vortex of vice, into which he is sinking,”

“You are right my young monitor,” said Mr. d’Allenberg; “I acknowledge my error; *your* system is consistent with humanity and

and our *duty*; and whether our endeavours to reform the wicked succeed or not, the consciousness of having performed *that duty*, is a sufficient recompense to us, and over-pays all our trouble. You see I am *your* convert at least, and will remember your short lesson as long as I live.

“ But to return to ourselves, I must inform you, two fair ladies think themselves extremely neglected, and I fancy you will find it difficult to exculpate a gallant young man who has proved so very *un-gallant* as not to pay his devoirs to a young lady that has come post here to see her friends.”

“ If *I have* been deficient in those duties, I, Sir, am the sufferer; and the circumstances that has impeded my attendance on the ladies, will, I hope, acquit me in your eyes. Doubtless, my friend, the Count has made *his* peace there, and *then my* presence or absence can be of little consequence.”

The moment these words escaped from the lips of Ferdinand, he would have given the world to have recalled them, apprehensive that

that he had betrayed the Count's secret, and the confidence of Louisa.

Mr. d'Allenberg looked at him with a keen and penetrating eye; the Count, with much surprise, and was for a moment silent.

"I take shame to myself," said he at last, that I have *not* performed a duty gratitude, respect, and esteem, claimed from me; but in truth, the business of the day, your unexpected elopement this morning, and a variety of perplexing thoughts, totally unqualified me for paying visits. You see, therefore, that you have not only been guilty of omissions yourself, but are the cause of other people's deficiencies."

The Count spoke the last words with a gay air, that a little reconciled Ferdinand to himself for the petulancy of his answer to Mr. d'Allenberg, which he sought to cover by saying, "To-morrow, Sir, I hope we shall have the honour of waiting upon the ladies, and apologizing for our *seeming* neglect."

"Very well," replied he, "I shall so report it, that you may receive a tolerable welcome;
and

and now that I see you safe, I bid you good evening; remember to come early, as I wish to confer with you respecting Louisa's affairs."

Mr. d'Allenberg having left them, the Baron expressed some surprise at the absence of his son.—He had scarcely spoken before he entered, and was rejoiced to see Ferdinand.—He said that he had been with Heli, who was in a very gloomy way for the loss of his riches: Fortunately they had not stripped his person; he had a snuff-box of value, a watch, and two rings, that were in his pocket; the whole might be worth about eight hundred Louis d'ors; but this, he said, was a trifle; what could he do with a sum like that.

"I then," continued Reiberg, "told him of the generous intentions the Count and Ferdinand had adopted.—I saw he was by no means grateful; and the interpreter told me, that he peremptorily declined all favours from them.—I did not urge the point, from an idea, that when he is in better health,

health, his temper may lose its present ferocity. The women servants had called there, under some apprehensions at having concealed themselves in a small cottage on one side of the wood, and two days being elapsed, they prevailed upon a man and woman to accompany them back.

The poor creatures were rejoiced to find their little property untouched; one of these he discharged; the other, with the interpreter, remains; I have promised to send an honest jeweller to him to-morrow; for he is resolved to dispose of his property, and lodge the money in safe hands; and when he is well, he intends to give up the cottage, and lodge with the interpreter. So much for Heli. The gentlemen retired at an early hour, with a strict injunction to Ferdinand, not to steal away at day-break again.

“The next morning, when they met at breakfast, all seemed to have recovered their spirits, except Ferdinand; *his* looks denoted a mind ill at ease; he eat little, and soon left them

them to write letters, previous to their purposed visit to Mr. d'Allenberg.

“He wrote to Mr. Dunloff, to Ernest, and a short epistle to his brother; he mentioned, that he hoped, in a fortnight or three weeks, he should revisit Suabia; that however earnestly he wished to be at Baden, and see his dear children, the painful remembrance of past scenes, made him dread an interview that must renew all his sorrows.

“Having a little relieved his mind by communicating his thoughts, he rejoined his friends, and prepared to accompany them.

“They soon arrived at the Doctor's, who had kindly accommodated them all.—Mr. d'Allenberg was ready to introduce them;—the two Barons, as strangers, were first announced; but when the Count and Ferdinand approached Miss d'Allenberg, the latter observed her emotions; she blushed, turned pale, trembled, and, with difficulty, replied to the compliment the Count made her; he, guessing at the situation of her heart, felt extremely for her and the Count; to relieve both,

both, he advanced, and paid his respects;—congratulated himself on the happiness of seeing her; and then turning to Louisa, “I rejoice, my amiable friend, to see you so perfectly recovered.”

“I am, indeed,” said she, “much better in health, and cannot be otherwise than happy, when blest with the society of my friends and benefactors.”

“The two Barons were charmed with the ladies, and Mr. d’Allenberg, studious to avoid any retrospection to unpleasant scenes, entered into a spirited conversation on Germanic affairs; the peace concluded with the Turks, the Emperor’s schemes in favour of his daughter, Maria Theresa, and such themes as carried them out of their own concerns.

“But on talking more fully about the late war, Louisa cried out, “will you forgive me, gentlemen, for interrupting your politics, I long to hear the story of our friend’s captivity, and how they amused themselves in Turkey.”

“Our amusements, Madam,” said the Count, “were very limited; but Ferdinand had

had certainly the advantage of *me*, and therefore is best qualified to gratify your curiosity."

"Will you have the goodness to indulge us," Sir, asked Miss d'Allenberg, in a voice so low and tremulous, that it touched Ferdinand, who passed the momentary thought, "What an amazing alteration between Miss d'Allenberg and Louisa! the ladies seem to have changed characters."

Then addressing himself to her—"There is so little to entertain you, Madam, in the relation, that it is soon made; for no great variety could be thrown into a life of confinement; he very readily obeyed her, however, and gave a brief recital of particulars, which have been already noticed."

When he had concluded, the ladies thanked him; Louisa observed archly, "You were peculiarly unfortunate, in not being noticed by some Turkish beauty, who might have broken your chains, and become a partner in your flight.—What a pretty romantic tale is here spoiled for want of a lady to embellish it."

"You

"You will recollect, Madam," answered he, "that I never was permitted to walk, but when Heli was with me; and the side where the ladies resided, was far distant from the apartments I inhabited; therefore I cannot, with any plausibility, violate truth, by boasting of *ladies* favours; indeed I have no obligations of *that kind*."

"How!" returned she; "are you so vain as to consider *our* friendship and good opinion so entirely your due, that it confers neither favour nor obligation? Pardon me, Madam, to *deserve* the *friendship* of two such ladies, would be my highest ambition; and to *obtain* it, I must consider as an honour that will gratify my vainest wishes."

"You have *extorted* a compliment, my dear Louisa," said Miss d'Allenberg, "and now I hope are satisfied."

Ferdinand ought to have replied to this "extorted," but he was out of spirits, and gladly availed himself of some trivial observation of young Reiberg's, to change the subject. This evasion passed not unobserved, which,

which, with the melancholy air of his countenance, made them feel great compassion for him.

For his part, he was not sorry when the visit ended; Mr. d'Allenberg was requested by the Baron to accompany them back to dinner, as the ladies were engaged in making preparations for their appearance in public the next day, Louisa's health being much restored, and company and amusement being indeed indispensables towards removing the dejection of Miss d'Allenberg's spirits.

In their walk home, Ferdinand and the Count being together, the former remarked how thin and pale Miss d'Allenberg was grown.

"She is much altered," added he; "yet I think her more captivating than ever:—There is something so interesting in the softness of her looks, and the melody of her voice."

"You are partial to melancholy beauties," said the Count, smiling.—"I remember you admired

admired Louisa much when she was sorrowful, and apparently declining into her grave; now, that the goddess, health, deigns to revisit, she seems to have lost her estimation with you."

"Not so," quickly replied Ferdinand, apprehensive that his friend was jealous of his attention to Miss d'Allenberg; "I am rejoiced to see her so unexpectedly recovered, and admire her as greatly as ever I did; her pleasing vivacity will, I hope, be of service to her friend.—Yet you must allow, the Count's death so recent, a man whom she so passionately loved, 'tis rather extraordinary that she appears to be so *little* affected."

"Not at all," answered the Count; "she had long ceased to esteem him; his conduct merited her scorn; and his late attempt against her must have eradicated every trait of affection; nor could she think herself safe from his machinations whilst he had existed. Her behaviour, therefore, is very natural;—she is freed from a villain, who had cruelly used her, and relieved from that fear and anxiety

anxiety which must have embittered every hour in his life time. I applaud her for not pretending to a regret or sorrow, it was impossible she should feel."

"Do you suppose, then," said Ferdinand, "'tis so easy a matter to teach the heart to resign its affections; can the unworthiness of a beloved object so soon eradicate all tenderness from a bosom accustomed to love?"

"I know at *least*, that it ought to be so," replied the Count; "because love ought to be grafted on esteem; and the loss of *one* should be the death of the other."

"*Should be*," repeated Ferdinand with a sigh.—"Alas! how seldom is the refractory heart under the guidance of reason."

Being joined by their friends, the conversation became general, and they walked together to the Baron's house.

They had hardly dined, when a servant entered and said, a man on horseback had a letter for Count Ferdinand, which he refused to deliver to any but himself.—Surprised, he hastily run to the door; the man respectfully

gave him the letter "from my master, Count Rhodophil Renzud." Ferdinand, with a trembling hand, broke the seal:—The contents were these:

"My Dear Brother,

"Life is ebbing fast; all hopes are over; if you ever wish to see me more, lose no time; set off directly; I have things of consequence to impart, for your interest; if you ever loved me, hasten to the dying

"RHODOPHIL."

"Good God!" exclaimed Ferdinand, "how long has my brother been ill?"

"He has been drooping some time," answered the servant; "but 'tis only a week since the doctor told him his danger, and the Countess is half-distracted; for I have heard that day and night he wishes to see you."

"Go to the next inn," said Ferdinand; "refresh yourself; order post-horses from the post-house; I will be ready in two hours to accompany you."

Excessively

Excessively agitated, he returned to his friends, produced the letter, and announced his intention of quitting Vienna immediately.

This design produced a general concern ; every face was clouded.

“ I will go with you,” said the Count.”

“ Indeed you will not,” replied Ferdinand ; “ it was your intention to stay some time longer ; the business we have been engaged in may require your presence here ; I cannot ask you to my brother’s castle ; a short time may decide how I am at liberty to act ; I shall write the moment I get home.”

“ Indeed,” said Mr. d’Allenberg, “ this is very unlucky, and will shorten our stay in Vienna.”

“ Perhaps, then,” said the Baron, “ we may all soon follow you ; for I have business that calls me into Bavaria, though I postponed it until the time for your departure was fixed, and which indeed I concluded would not happen for some time.”

"I wish," said the Count, "you would permit me to go with you; I feel as if I *ought* to go."

"Not a word on the subject," returned Ferdinand; "I leave you here to answer for me to Miss d'Allenberg, to her friend, and all other claims upon me; have the kindness to acquaint the ladies of the necessity which tears me from them for the present, though I hope it will not be long before we meet again."

"I hope the same," said Mr. d'Allenberg; "for you possess my warmest esteem and best wishes."

Ferdinand felt the kindness of his friends, and withdrew, to hide his emotions, and prepare for his journey.

"You will excuse me," said Mr. d'Allenberg, "if I leave you; I like not the parting minute, and have an unpleasant task to perform, in preparing my young folks to receive you in the evening without your friend. I shall expect you, however; we will mingle our regrets."

He

He left them ; the Count repaired to Ferdinand's apartment ; again urged his wish to accompany him ; but the other as firmly refused it.

" Stay here," said he, " 'till you hear from me, and then perhaps I shall solicit, as the first wish of my heart, what I now refuse, the company of my friend."

The Count was silenced, though not satisfied, and assisted very reluctantly in settling things for their separation. The moment arrived ; the post horses were at the door, and they parted with equal regret on all sides. Ferdinand determined to take no rest until he arrived at Lintz, but merely changed horses, and proceeded with the greatest expedition. The servant informed him he had business of consequence to do for Madam, the Countess, at Lintz, but which would not detain him many hours.

Here then Ferdinand thought he might rest, and to Lintz they at length arrived, excessively fatigued with long and hard riding. When Ferdinand had ordered some refresh-

ment, the servant left him, and he seized five minutes to write a few lines to Count M——; the man was not long absent; they retired for a few hours to sleep, and then rose to pursue their journey with fresh spirits.

They had got near five miles from Lintz, and had ascended a steep hill, which was covered with trees.—On one side, you saw the plain through which the road lay; on the other side was a craggy mountain, at the foot of which run the river: The path-way was narrow; one horse only could with safety proceed at a time: Ferdinand was turning his horse round a clump of trees, when he received a shot, that brought him tumbling on the earth, and in the same moment, before he had recovered any recollection, he was precipitated down the broken mountain, and fell into the river, so bruised and senseless, that when he recovered his reason, he could scarcely recollect what had befallen him, nor the smallest idea from what hand he had received the injury.

Providentially,

Providentially, in rolling into the river, one of his hands got entangled in some low bushes, that grew on the edge of the water, that he was suspended from sinking, as he might otherwise have done, and the chill of the water restored his senses, but he saw the water was coloured with his blood, and felt that he was growing very faint; he therefore made an effort, by clinging fast to the wood and weeds, to drag himself out, and with some difficulty succeeded.

He found the shot had gone through the fleshy part of his right arm, and slightly wounded his side. With no small labour he got his coat off; for he had many bruises which began to grow painful; he tore his shirt, and with that and his handkerchief, bound up the wound as well as pain would enable him to do; but the effort, loss of blood, and the soreness of his limbs, rendered him extremely faint, and he had just time to drag himself farther on the bank, when he again felt his senses leaving him, and supposed death was at hand.

He returned a second time to life, but so enfeebled, and in so much pain, that he found it impossible to rise, and saw no prospect of relief: He looked round to see if the servant was in a similar situation, but no object met his view, and he had much reason to fear that he was killed upon the spot, and thrown into the river, where he sunk; for he had no doubt upon his mind but that he received the wound from some banditti, and even seemed to have an idea of seeing some objects among the trees just as he was wounded; and he supposed, by falling from the horse, he had *accidentally* rolled down the mountain, as their intention was doubtless to plunder him. Having settled the matter in his own mind, he pitied the fate of the servant, and lamented the distress his brother and friends would feel, when hearing no intelligence of him.

Hopeless of assistance, he thought his struggles for life, had only protracted his fate a few short hours, when he must inevitably perish; his only chance of help was the passing
sing

sing of a boat, and that hope was a very feeble one.

He happened to have two small biscuits, which he had put into his pocket at one of their last stages, but which he found broken in pieces by his fall; for the present he wanted no refreshment; his faintness arose from pain, and the sickness occasioned by rolling down such a tremendous height, which, when he raised his eyes to view it, he considered it as next to a miracle that he had not been dashed to pieces.

For some hours, he remained comfortless and despairing on the bank, when suddenly he saw a figure issue from a cavity in one of the hanging fragments of the rock, that appeared like something human, though bent almost double with age; a blanket wrapped round him, with holes to let out his arms, and tied round the middle with a cord; a long beard, and feeble steps, proclaimed his age and weakness. As this object approached nearer, Ferdinand saw his head was uncover-

ed, exposed to the weather, his venerable silver locks flowing round his shoulders.

He was so struck with wonder and admiration, that he had no power to cry out; and, as he lay, the weeds and wild shrubs almost hid him from being seen. The old man was passing on slowly, and seemingly deeply meditating, when the other exerted himself to say, "Stop! Oh! stop!"

The man started.—"From whence comes that voice?" said he, advancing, and presently discovered Ferdinand.

"Gracious Father!" exclaimed he, "who are you, and how came you here, my son?"

"I fell from the brow of the hill into the river."

"Wonderful Providence! What, unhurt?"

"I cannot say that," replied he; "I am very much bruised, I believe, besides being wounded by a pistol in my arm and side, which occasioned my falling."

"Alas! my son, how shall I help you;—you cannot rise."

"Indeed

"Indeed I cannot; but perhaps I may endeavour to crawl a small distance, if there is any place to receive me."

"Try, then, my child; for I have a comfortable cell, if 'tis possible for you to reach it."

Ferdinand, suddenly inspired with hope, and fresh desires for life, exerted himself with uncommon resolution, and though he felt agonies of pain, he bore it without a groan, so anxious was he to obtain rest and help.

Such is the natural fondness for life implanted in the mind of man, that when sickness and despair has annihilated hope, and taught the suffering wretch to look forward to the close of his existence, as his only refuge from misery, if some unlooked for crisis changes the nature of his disorder, or a dawn of better prospects is presented to his view—he no longer courts death as the end of his troubles, but with new desires, new hopes, he struggles to retain and preserve life, though sure of encountering future ills, and of going through the same sad scene again.

So was it with Ferdinand, to whom an existence for many months, nay, even for years, had been an evil, he thought, he should have felt grateful to be released from, but the near prospect of death had taught him a different lesson; he found he had still some ties on earth that clung to his heart, and whom he shuddered to think of parting with for ever.

Eager, therefore, to profit by the old man's offer, he so successfully laboured, that he got to the part of the rock from whence he saw him emerge; but it was a work of extreme difficulty, and with all the assistance that old age was capable of lending, that he crawled up the broken fragments, and at length crept through the cavity into a spacious cell. The moment he entered, the spirit that had supported him failed, and he fainted.

The venerable man poured water upon him, and when he perceived returning life, forced a little wine down his throat, that revived him.— He next examined his bruises, and anointed them with some oil, the only thing

thing he had that could do good, and having shook up his mattrafs of straw, he covered it with a blanket, and laid Ferdinand upon it. In a very short time, overcome with fatigue and weakness, he dropped asleep, and enjoyed comfortable rest for more than six hours.

When he awoke, though stiff and sore, yet his spirits and strength seemed much recruited; the good man gave him some bread and wine, and with a few simple herbs and oil, prepared to dress his wound and bruises.— Luckily the ball passed quite through his arm, and wounded his side, without lodging in it; therefore his venerable host gave him hopes no ill consequences would ensue from that; the bruises would be more troublesome than the wound; but as he observed, 'twas a miracle that every bone had not been broken.

Ferdinand mentioned to him the accident as well as he could recollect; for the whole was so momentary, that he was hardly sensible how it happened. The old man paused, and considered.

“Possibly,”

“Possibly,” said he, “there *may be* banditti in the neighbouring hills and woods, but I never heard of any accident there; ’tis a strange business; but thank Heaven, my son, whatever was their evil intent, you have escaped with life; and if in a few days you are able to walk, there is a castle not far off, where you will be better taken care of than by me.”

Ferdinand thanked the venerable man, and was grateful to Heaven, who had so wonderfully preserved him. The simple remedies applied to his hurts, agreed perfectly well with them; and in the course of two days he began to feel considerably better.

C H A P. IV.

DURING this time he had inquired of his host "how long he had lived in that rock?"

"Many years (replied he;) I had once a place at Court, was esteemed by the late Emperor, and not a small favourite with a Lady he loved. I often attended him when he visited her privately, and I happened to be young and pleased her fancy: I do not pretend to defend my conduct, I ought to have remembered the Emperor was my master and benefactor; but the seductive arts of women it is difficult to withstand, and perhaps I made no efforts for the purpose;

pose; be that as it may, the intrigue was discovered, the Lady was disgraced and confined; a criminal accusation, certainly without the least foundation, was set on foot against me; I fled to save my life, for a price was set on my head.

"In a boat I got landed on this side of the river, and strolled to these mountains, resolved to hide myself in a cave till the search was over, and then leave Germany for ever. Climbing the different rocks I at length discovered this cavity, and took courage to enter it: I found it such as you see, whether made by the hand of nature, or the work of some unhappy proscribed man, I know not. This I made my resting place; water and a few herbs, that grew wild here, was all I had for three days, and I found life could not long be supported in that way.

"The fourth day I followed the course of the river a good way, and saw one of the packet-boats, that goes between Ulm and Lentz, with passengers, going by: I called

to them, and they drew near ; I entreated some provisions ; they offered to take me on board ; that I declined, telling them peculiar misfortunes had made society hateful to me, and that I had resolved to live in an uninhabited place. The people I believe supposed me to be deranged, but very humanely supplied me. I had not fled without money, which, in the situation I had chosen, was likely to last me a great while ; I bargained therefore with the master of the packet-boat regularly to call near that spot, and relieve my necessities, for which I would pay him liberally. This he never failed doing, and though doubtless I ran some risque from the variety of passengers who saw me, yet, whether want of curiosity, indolence, or compassion, saved me I know not ; but I suppose the Emperor's wrath abated, and I was totally forgotten.

“ I had resided here near two months without venturing to climb the hills, or explore the country beyond the spot I inhabited ;
but

but the failure of the regular packet, from what cause I know not, had exhausted my provisions, and gave me a prospect of approaching death if I was not relieved. I saw several boats pass, but at too great a distance to make myself heard. The weather set in cold and dreary, and I was almost in a state of despair, which at length conquered my fears of being discovered, and I resolved to ascend the hills, and penetrate through the woods.

“ One morning I set off, but from want of food was too feeble to proceed with any expedition; however I persevered, and with much labour got round the side of these rocky hills to a most beautiful wood of chestnuts, about three miles from hence, and in the midst of the grove saw a Castle. Overcome with fatigue, without hesitation, I advanced and rung at the gate; a man appeared, to whom I mentioned my necessities. I was courteously invited in, had some food given me, and questioned how far I was travelling?

Without

Without any disguise I freely told my place of abode, and that hunger had driven me to make application there.

“ This story was related to the Lord of the Castle, and I was ordered to attend him. He was a venerable old man, two youths, his sons, were with him. Without telling my name, or assigning my motives, I briefly said, misfortunes had deprived me of my fortune, and driven me from my country.

The old Lord blamed me for seeking an abode among the mountains, told me that a young and active mind ought not to indulge in solitude and idleness, that there were other countries, and many situations, in which a young man might be useful to society, and creditable to himself. — He was certainly right, but I felt no inclination to seek my fortune, without a name I dared avow, or recommendations to give me consequence.

“ I liked the solitary rambling life I had led for some time, an habitual indolence, perhaps an unsocial temper, and I acknowledge,

ledge, not the smallest inclination for a military life, had altogether received strength from the silence and obscurity of my present dwelling; I therefore declined all his kind advice, and indeed offers, evaded his inquiries, and persisted in my resolution of living among the mountains, woods and glens, so that I could find sufficient sustenance.

“ When he found my determination was fixed, I thought he eyed me with contempt :
‘ A young man to live secluded from society, and from choice lead such an inactive desultory kind of life (said he) can have but a very weak mind, an ignoble soul, or must have deserved to be proscribed by mankind : However, as a fellow creature, you claim relief, therefore I will order for you a few necessaries that may make your cave comfortable, and twice a week my steward shall have orders to relieve your wants. I am going to leave this country in a few days; but will take care you shall not want the means to support your existence.’

“ He

“ He turned from me, and I felt severely humbled. Two servants were sent with me loaded with blankets, a mattress, and several little conveniencies. I was something amused by the mixture of curiosity and fear those fellows expressed when they saw my habitation, they assisted me in disposing of the things, and seemed extremely glad when I dismissed them.

“ From that hour to this *my* life has been uniformly the same. My dislike of society gained ground daily, and accustoming myself to live upon little, and finding many palatable herbs round the mountains, I have been no great tax upon the bounty of the Castle. — The old Lord I never saw more; one of his sons married and resided in the Castle, but I have understood, from little hints thrown out by the present steward, that he was unhappy, and now lives at some distant part of the country.

“ As my clothes wore out I refused others, determined to appear as I lived, like a hermit

mit detached from the world. I take fish here sometimes, and still have what I please from the Castle, which has been long deserted by the family, and only inhabited by the steward, his wife, and two men, who look after the ground and cattle."

Here the hermit stopped; Ferdinand had been very attentive to him, and had decided in his own mind, that he had glossed over his conduct by only a slight account of his falseness and ingratitude to his Prince: He concluded his errors had been of no common magnitude, and such as deserved the severest punishment, or he would never have given up the world. This conclusion was strengthened as he proceeded in the story, and though he felt himself indebted for his assistance, yet the contempt that naturally arose in his mind for a character so unamiable, lessened his sense of gratitude.

He had continual occasions to observe an unequal and unpleasant temper in the hermit. He had a few books, with which he was supplied

plied from the Castle, pens, ink and paper, neither of which seemed to afford him amusement. He was always rambling about, as if weary of his existence, and though he affected the language, as well as the manners, of a hermit, yet he paid but little attention to the duties of religion; his devotions were by fits and starts, and seemed not to proceed from a regular and habitual course.

From all these observations Ferdinand could not respect his host, and therefore was very impatient to get well enough to leave him; but more than a week passed without having strength to walk, his bruises being infinitely more painful than the wound.

During this time the hermit had not been at the Castle, for he had received his usual supply of bread, meat and wine, the very day that Ferdinand was so wonderfully saved from a dreadful death, and having caught a good deal of fish, they had not felt any want of provisions; but now the stock being exhausted, he signified his intention of going to the Castle.

Castle.—“ I should think (said Ferdinand) that blanket covering must be very troublesome to walk any distance with.”

“ No (replied the other) it is as commodious as a coat, and, were it otherwise, custom would render it easy.”

The hermit set off for his walk ; Ferdinand, just able to creep about, came out of the cave to enjoy the sun and fresh air ; looking round him, he observed on one side a smaller opening nearer to the ground ; curiosity led him to this, and stooping almost to the earth, he saw that it widened, and appeared to have light within. This discovery engaged him to crawl into it ; at first he found some difficulty, the passage was dark, and the faint light seemed farther off ; still he persisted to crawl on, when on a sudden it opened into a large cave, with a rill of water running through it, and dropping from the sides.

A ray of light, which proceeded from a small chasm at the top, served to discover the

the most beautiful sight that imagination can form: the waters petrified round looked like so many diamonds, hanging in long spars, and twisted into a variety of shapes, glittering so as to dazzle the eye; several large pieces of rock-work hung over the top; many of those shining spars suspended from them, which, with the rill of water, and the solemn stillness of the place, had a most wonderful effect upon the mind of Ferdinand; he was never tired of admiring the beauties of this enchanting cavern.

“How comes it (said he) that the hermit never mentioned this sweet place? What an insensible blockhead he must be; he is fit indeed to live alone, since neither society, nor the beauties of nature have any charms for him; he merely vegetates: What a horrid life! The wild and foolish scheme of rambling that once possessed me, though I am now convinced of its absurdity, yet was ordered by Providence to prove beneficial to others; but this man can have no opportunity

of doing good, unless another is thrown over the mountain, or cast up from the river, and even his assistance is given with an apathy that is disgusting.

These ideas passed in his mind whilst he admired the dazzling petrifications; but feeling himself very chilly, he wisely crept back to the entrance, and remained on the Beach till the old man appeared tolerably loaded.—

“Here (said he) is some provisions, and I have related your accident to the steward; he will come here to-morrow, and you may be taken to the Castle if you like.”

“Most certainly I shall like it (said Ferdinand) for many reasons. He then told him where he had been, and expressed his surprise, that he had not mentioned a place so replete with natural curiosities.”

“To you indeed (answered he) I might have thought it would be interesting; but after once seeing it, I never went a second time, so it slipped my memory: I dare say there are a hundred such places about, but I never sought for any of them.”

“What

“What a lifeless, inanimate lump! — (thought Ferdinand :) Yes, indeed, I shall be mighty glad to quit such a being, who has no more soul than the rock he inhabits.”

The next day a well-looking, middle aged man appeared at the opening of the rock, and being invited, entered within it. He congratulated Ferdinand with kindness and respect on his miraculous escape from death, or at least broken limbs, and invited him to come and spend a few days at the Castle until he was able to travel.

Ferdinand accepted the offer, but was fearful he could not get there. — “With my assistance, a good firm stick, and a little resting, I do not despair (said the steward) and the sooner you make the trial the better.” — Ferdinand wanted but very few persuasions to a thing so agreeable to his inclinations as leaving his insensible companion; therefore, after returning his thanks, they parted with equal indifference, and taking the steward’s arm he turned his back on the rock.

The distance to the Castle was about three miles, but it was through the woods on the side of the hills, and not very easy walking, which, with the weakness of Ferdinand, made it full three hours before they arrived at it. A bed was ordered to be got ready, and, as it was a luxury he had not enjoyed for some time, he soon fell asleep, and forgot all his cares. Whilst he enjoys a comfortable repose we will look back on his friends at Vienna.

CHAP. V.

MR. D'Alenberg, after leaving the Baron's, returned to his daughter, whom he found in tears, her head reclining on the shoulder of Louisa. — "My dear Theresa (said this tender father) have some compassion upon me ; must the remnant of my days be embittered by seeing my child unhappy. I have already told you there exists a possibility that every wish of your heart may be gratified."

"No, my dear father, No (said she, raising her head) my happiness is beyond the reach of *possibilities* ; but I trust despair will have

the same effects of making me composed and resigned, as if I *could* indulge a visionary hope. These tears will be the last you shall see me shed, not one sigh more shall give you pain ; I have given too much indulgence to a fatal weakness which stole upon me insensibly, but now I throw it from my heart for ever. *Your* daughter never shall live to blush for her attachment to an insensible object ; but she will admire the constancy of an unfortunate man, and imitate a character that rises upon her every hour. Yes, *his* fortitude, *his* discretion, *his* strict adherence to honour and rectitude of conduct, shall inspire me with equal courage, to bear the misfortunes of life without sinking under them, and teach me to respect *your* feelings by suppressing my *own*."

She rose, and kissing her father's hand —
" Do not look at me (said she) with such tender surprise ; this is not a false heroism ; you shall see what resolution and a sense of duty will enable me to perform."

Mr.

Mr. D'Alenberg was charmed with the behaviour of his daughter; but taking an opportunity, on her leaving him, of speaking to Louisa, she followed her friend to another apartment.

In the evening the Count and the two Barons paid a visit to the Ladies; every one expressed their regret at the sudden mandate which had taken their friend from Vienna, and every tongue was lavish in his praise. The Count seemed but half himself without Ferdinand, and could not reconcile it to his own feelings, that he submitted to let him go alone with only his brother's messenger.

Two days after the departure of Ferdinand, a messenger came to the Baron's from Mr. D'Alenberg, acquainting him with the arrival of the Countess Wolfran, and requested to see the Count immediately. He obeyed the summons. On being introduced to an apartment where that Gentleman waited to receive him, after saluting him, "I have been a witness (said he) to one of the most
F 4 interesting

interesting scenes you can possibly conceive, between two amiable and noble minded women. The indiscretion of Louisa, in marrying Count Wolfran without her parent's sanction, she has amply atoned for, not only by her subsequent sufferings, but by a generosity of conduct that highly exalts her.

You know the subject of the letter she wrote to the Countess, and her fixed determination never to avail herself of the Count's last declaration in her favour. The Countess, on the receipt of her letters, without communicating the contents to any one, set off post for Vienna, leaving her child to the care of a friend in the Convent.

She came directly to this house; the meeting was truly affecting, and the self-denying arguments on both sides, such as did honour to the goodness of their hearts. — Louisa held one that I thought was incontrovertible. "In resigning those rights (said she) which you wish me to assume, I forfeit nothing; claims which were never publicly made, nor

at

at any time allowed, from which I could derive but a trifling pecuniary advantage to myself *only*, which must subject me to the talk of the country, and drag me into public notice as an object of compassion for past injuries, and of curiosity for the claims and circumstances so mortifying, which I must adduce to prove my rights; advantages attained under all these considerations would be to me more humiliating than indigence if unnoticed.

Had the Count acknowledged me in the life time of my father, my duty, and regard for *his* honour, would certainly have made me act very differently, and then, my dear Countess, I should not have known the superior nobleness of your mind, so different from the jealousy and hatred a narrow and contracted heart would have felt towards an object who had, however innocently, interrupted her happiness.

Never, were I to live a thousand years, shall I forget your kind visit, and subsequent

F 5

generosity :

generosity: And will you deny the poor Louisa the heart-felt satisfaction of imitating, as well as she can, so bright an example?— But to do away every idea of any obligation to me, I own to you, my dear friends, that was I a parent, had I a child to inherit from the claims I might bring forward, *then*, I should feel it a duty to assert them; but to wrong the Countess, married in the face of the world, to disinherit a *lawful* heir, for such is your son; to throw the estates and titles into a very distant branch of the family, to the prejudice of his own child, merely for a temporary advantage to myself — never, never, can I think of it! And after all, what merit is there in giving up claims which the uncertainty of the law might long withhold, and, perhaps, deny me at last for want of sufficient proofs.”

“Those arguments of Louisa, which I think I have pretty exactly repeated,” continued Mr. D’Alenberg, “seemed unanswerable; the Countess had only to oppose
what

what she termed justice and equity; the matter was at length referred to me, and both parties pledged themselves to abide by my determination; without hesitation I pronounced Louisa's conduct both just and proper, and that the Countess ought, without scruple, to act for her son according to the rights allowed her by the world.

"My opinion was decisive, and concluded the debate. Louisa has drawn up a short declaration in these words, to which myself and daughter have signed as witnesses, and to which you also are requested to put your signature.

"Louisa, the daughter of Claude Hautweitzer, thus publicly acknowledges Theodora — to be the true and lawful wife of Frederic Count Wolfran; and as such entitled to all his estates and effects in right of her son, heir to the late Count Wolfran. — This declaration made before, and witnessed by, &c. &c."

"This paper (pursued Mr. D'Alenberg) she has written herself for the farther satisfaction of the Countess, not that I think there will ever exist any cause that shall make it necessary to produce it, only that there were some persons in the room when Mr. Hautweitzer claimed the Count as *his* daughter's husband; but as the affair fell to the ground, and that claim has never been renewed, there is no great chance that it will be noticed; if it should, this paper will be conclusive, and, Louisa being almost entirely unknown, has consented to adopt our name, and to reconcile the Countess to herself, agrees to accept a very handsome independent settlement.

"Thus all parties are satisfied at last, and all this business has been begun and ended in little more than three hours."

Mr. D'Alenberg having concluded, introduced the Count to the Ladies. He was much struck with the fine person and noble air of the young Countess, and with admiration gazed on three such women, as it would have

have been extremely difficult to produce their equals.

He earnestly inquired after Eugenia.—“ I have a letter for you, Sir,” said the Countess, “ from my amiable friend. Thank Heaven, her health is amazingly restored, though the fatigues and fasts she voluntarily inflicts upon herself are great trials to a delicate constitution. I have left my child to her tender care, and shall feel inconceivable regret to part from that Lady, and attend to the necessary cares my friends have heaped upon me for the advantage of my son. All my objections are over-ruled and silenced, Sir, but I shall never feel half satisfied with myself.”

The Count joined heartily in the opinion before given, and then mentioned the civilities for which he was indebted to Baron Reiberg and his son. The Countess blushed at the name; but with a noble frankness she said, “ I doubt not, Sir, from the expression of your countenance, but that you have heard of the early attachment the young Baron
honoured

honoured me with. My dear father was pleased to consign both my person and fortune to the care of Baron Nolken, and made *his* consent absolutely necessary to my marriage with any man, at the same time recommending Count Wolfran for my husband, if he desired my hand."

The Baron, though a good man, availed himself of this authority in favour of his nephew, whom *he* certainly thought a good character; my preference of the Baron was reprobated, the acquaintance broken off, and in obedience to the will of my father I consented to sacrifice myself rather than wound my character and delicacy, by forfeiting my fortune to indulge what might have been deemed a juvenile attachment in a giddy young woman.

I owe the Baron much respect, and many obligations for his strict adherence to my wishes and entreaties. He respected my peace, and I had too much regard for *his*, ever to inform him of the cruel duplicity of
Count

Count Wolfran ; I rather wished him to believe our separation was my own work, and the effects of my own weak and discontented spirit.

"And your secret, Madam," said the Count, "has never transpired ; the Baron feared you was unhappy, suspected the Count did not behave well ; but he had no grounds to form his opinion from, as upon inquiry he was told the Count opposed your retirement, and grieved at your absence."

"I am glad the Baron was so informed," returned she ; "but the hypocrite never regretted me ; the possession of my estates easily consoled him for my absence."

As the Countess was now compelled to appear as the widow of the late Count Wolfran, she was obliged to confine herself till after the funeral, which was ordered to be at the burial-place of his family near Ulm, and every preparation was set on foot to forward the procession in a day or two.

It

It was singular enough to the company to see two widows, both of whom disdained to assume any appearance of sorrow for a man they equally despised, whose interests, one would suppose, must have been incompatible with each other, linked in the firmest bands of friendship, and each feeling the highest admiration for the merits of her friend.

The fortunate escape of Louisa being talked of, naturally led to the situation of Heli, and she avowed much pain that the poor Turk should have been so great a sufferer by affording her an asylum in his house. "I think it a duty upon me," said she, "to reimburse his losses in some degree, and the Countess having made me so handsome a provision, infinitely beyond my wants, I shall certainly appropriate a part of it for his use, since it is through him ultimately that I am indebted for the blessings I at present enjoy."

This generous intention was only opposed in part, the Count insisting both for himself and Ferdinand, that they should participate

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in the benefits she proposed for Heli. This claim was at length allowed, and he was commissioned to get a settlement drawn up for the advantage of the Turk.

The day following Mr. D'Alenberg and his daughter was to be presented at Court; she would gladly have declined a fatiguing, and to her little pleasing, ceremony; but as her father appeared desirous of it, she submitted to his wishes. The Count, the two Barons, and the Lady of the first Minister, were to be of the party.

The day came, and Miss D'Alenberg went through the ceremony, was graciously received, and very much admired. One Nobleman, of high rank and fortune, was particularly charmed with her, fixed himself in her party, and paid her the most marked attention.

In the evening, when all the friends met at Mr. D'Alenberg's lodgings, the Count gave an account of his commission to Heli, which he had executed that morning, and at length

length prevailed upon him to accept the settlement; but he declared he would not relax in his endeavours to trace Fatima, and should he recover his jewels, or such part of them as would enable him to live, he would throw up his obligations to Christians, and enjoy the pleasure of revenge upon an ungrateful, abandoned woman.

After the Count had repeated his negotiation with Heli, the Gentlemen all rallied Miss D'Alenberg on the conquest she had made that morning at Court.—“I have no doubt,” said Baron Reiberg, “but that Mr. D'Alenberg will receive a visit from Count Dusseldoff.”

“It will be an unnecessary piece of politeness,” said the young Lady, hastily; “for I hope in a few days we shall leave Vienna, and return home. Our appearance this morning I thought a work of supererogation, as our stay here will be so very short.”

“Indeed, Madam,” returned the Baron, “few young Ladies would think so lightly of such

such a conquest. Count Dusseldoff is a very worthy young Nobleman, highly in favour with his Royal Master, a very handsome fortune in possession, and his reversionary ones."——

"Dear Sir," exclaimed she, "neither his possessions, or reversions, can be any thing to me. I hope and believe you mistake the nature of his attentions, which certainly extended no farther than common politeness. I beg," continued she, very seriously, seeing the Baron smile, and going to speak, "I entreat you, Sir, to choose some other subject for your observations. Your present ideas are very visionary ones."

"I beg your pardon, Madam," said he, "and have done."

The Countess gladly availed herself of the privilege allowed her as a widow to retire from company, and therefore avoided being seen by the young Baron; but he was changed into a new man, life and animation informed his whole person, and the hope, though a distant one, that a day would arrive

rive when he might be permitted to see his adored Theodosia, and resume his former claims upon her heart, made him submit with a tolerable grace to the rules of decorum.

The next morning the Baron's predictions were verified; Count Duffeldoff sent in his name to Mr. D'Alenberg, his daughter was not present, and he received a visit he considered as an honour. After a very little prefatory discourse, the Count frankly avowed his admiration of Miss D'Alenberg, and requested permission to visit her.

Her father most respectfully acknowledged the honour intended to her, told him that he had long since resigned all parental authority to dictate to her choice, having reason to be perfectly satisfied with her prudence, and assured that she would never form an imprudent attachment; that his Lordship being but little acquainted with her person, and not at all with her disposition, or understanding, he hoped he might be excused for saying, "it was rather a premature declaration."

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The Count said, "that it became his character to be candid towards Mr. D'Alenberg; but to the young Lady he should be more reserved, and only requested, for the present, permission to pay him and his daughter that attention, which, as strangers, they were entitled to." This politeness could not be refused, and on that footing the Count was permitted to pay his respects to them in the evening.

He had scarcely left the house before Count M—— was announced, who with great joy produced a few lines he had received from Ferdinand, the same he had written at Lintz. The Ladies were soon informed of the letter, which conveyed his best respects to them, and the whole party seemed rejoiced to hear of his safe arrival there: But this pleasure was short-lived, when Mr. D'Alenberg mentioned the visit he had received, and the permission he had granted.

For a few minutes his daughter seemed in great agitation; she stole several looks at the
Count;

Count; his countenance said nothing. She soon recovered, and only replied, "her father had a right to see whom he pleased, although *she* could not see the necessity of adding to their acquaintance for the very short time they should stay in that city." — No answer was made to this observation, and the Count receiving an invitation for himself and his friends, they separated soon after.

As he walked back he recollected the secret attachment which Louisa had hinted at as the cause of her friend's disorder upon her spirits, and revolving every occurrence as they rose to his mind, he began to entertain an idea, that either Ferdinand or himself was the object of it. He was many years older than his friend, and he thought very inferior to him in every personal endowment; yet he had remarked she generally addressed herself to him, and the particular looks she had eyed him with when her father spoke of the Count's visit, had not passed unobserved then, and now, from several corroborating

roborating circumstances, seemed to proceed from no common cause.

There is no man, at any time of life, but has some latent spark of vanity, which may be raised by accidental and concurring incidents. Count M—— had still such advantages of person, as might well warrant more than a bare supposition that he was not deficient in attraction, and from the *idea* once obtruding on his mind, many little trifling instances were recollected, that fixed it there, and he concluded Miss D'Alenberg had certainly entertained a decided partiality for him.

He was too noble and generous not to lament that he was so distinguished, because he still retained a warm affection for Eugenia, and *had* that affection been cooled, yet his honour and feelings never would suffer him to pay particular attention to any woman whilst she existed; he therefore concluded it would be most prudent and proper for him to relax in his visits, and, if possible, to avoid

being a companion in their journey when they should return into Suabia.

Count Duffeldoff made his visit, and was still more charmed with Miss D'Alenberg than at first. The little she did say, and that was as little as was consistent with politeness, gave him the highest opinion of her understanding and cultivated mind. She was above assuming any consequence from his partiality to her, and being perfectly indifferent to him, she treated him as a Gentleman chance had thrown in her way, and whom possibly she might never see again; for she took an opportunity of saying they should *soon* leave Vienna, and that she was so devoid of fashion, as to prefer the country to all the amusements a gay and crowded city could hold out to her.

In the course of a week his visits were several times repeated, and at length he took courage to avow his admiration in very explicit terms. Her answer was short, but decided: "I am truly sensible of the honour
of

of your good opinion ; but, my Lord, there are insuperable obstacles to any union between us. My father has the goodness to permit me in this important business to decide for myself; therefore I am not accountable to any other person. My Lord, I *never can* be your's : I respect you, I am grateful, but I can entertain no other sentiments for you, and I beg that I may never more hear a word on this subject.

The Count, mortified and disappointed, appealed to the father, he absolutely declined any interference, though he acknowledged the Count's proposals were highly honourable both to himself and daughter; but he was convinced her resolution was unalterable. — Thus ended the hopes of Count Duffeldoff, and he ceased to importune her farther.

Whilst this affair was pending Count M—very seldom called, and when he did his visits were short, his behaviour cool. The Ladies noticed this alteration, but supposed it was occasioned by his uneasiness in not

hearing from Ferdinand ; indeed *all* grew impatient at his silence, as they only waited to hear of his arrival and situation to fix on a day for following him.

Baron Reiberg had received a letter from his steward that the valet was safe with him, and appeared to be a very *good sort of a man*. This indefinite term was not misapplied to him, for he had a few good traits in his character, which, if he had belonged to a better master, might have made him a valuable servant ; for he was strictly faithful to him, and made his inclinations and conscience subservient to what he thought was his duty to his employer ; unfortunately he had not understanding, or strength of mind, to distinguish between *that* duty, and what he owed to himself and society, the consequence of that slavery and vassallage, which the German Lords exact from their poor tenantry and servants.

Ferdinand had been gone now ten days, no news was received, and they were extremely

tremely uneasy; when one day an express arrived to Baron Reiberg from Count Rhodophil, requesting to know "if any servant of his had appeared at the Baron's house to attend on his brother, he had dispatched a messenger more than a fortnight since to implore Ferdinand's return, as he supposed himself then at the point of death; that although much recovered, he was still in a weak state, and very unhappy from not seeing or hearing of his brother, or whether the messenger had reached Vienna or not."

Never was consternation greater than what the Baron and his friends felt on the receipt of this letter; from the date Ferdinand ought to have been there several days preceding it. This, with his silence to them, gave unspeakable apprehensions to the whole party, and accelerated their resolution to quit Vienna. The messenger was sent back with an account of Ferdinand's arrival at Lintz on his way to Baden, since which they had heard nothing of him.

Mr. D'Allenberg declined acquainting the Ladies of the cause which hastened their journey, and Miss D'Allenberg was so desirous of returning, that she readily fell in with her father's opinion, that it was unnecessary to wait for letters from Ferdinand, as they were going to him, and letters could be dispatched after them. Louisa had no will but her friends, and the Countess was anxious to see her son, and had much business to go through at Ulm. Thus the whole party made up their mind for the journey, and the second day after the next was fixed upon for their departure. Here then we leave them to follow Ferdinand.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

THE comforts of a bed, and the prospect of being soon able to pursue his journey, gave him some hours of quiet rest at the castle of Danhaet; he awoke refreshed, and in spirits.—The steward and his wife were worthy people; advanced rather above the middle age, plain in their language and habits, but with excellent hearts, and an honest frankness that engaged confidence.

Ferdinand was extremely desirous to write to his brother and friends; the steward fur-

nished him with materials for writing, and advised his taking a passage in one of the boats that took passengers between Lintz and Ulm. This advice the other readily agreed to follow, as the most easy way of proceeding for a person whose limbs had not yet recovered their strength and pliability. The steward told him they were about seven miles from a post town, but he would get his letters conveyed thither, and also inquire about his passage.

Ferdinand was charmed with the situation of this castle; it was built on the side of a hanging wood, which rose gradually to the top of a high hill, and sheltered it from the keen blasts of the north.—Large plantations of chesnuts seemed to surround it, among which were cut several beautiful walks and narrow vistas, terminated by some picturesque views. In front was a hanging garden of large extent, from whence there was a declivity down to the banks of the river. The castle itself was old and out of repair, but the apartments.

apartments were noble, and the furniture, though faded and decayed, yet perfectly clean and commodious.

Talking with the steward, he observed the situation was so romantic, and the environs so beautiful, that he was astonished his lord never came to it.

“Why, Sir,” answered he, “it is the general opinion of the country, that the left wing of the castle, or rather a detached pavilion, which you see is almost enveloped by the trees, is haunted; and the reason is this; a state prisoner was once confined there, and, as the story goes, was murdered; one of my lord’s ancestors had the care of him; ’tis an old and a foolish story, I think—but so it is, our old lord never permitted any one to live in it, and they do say that the present lord was once much frightened, for he and his lady disagreed, and he confined her for a time in that place, only going to her by day himself; how it was, I don’t know, but he was frightened, as they say; so he took her away, and
G 4 put

put her into a convent, and since that time never returned here."

"A strange story," said Ferdinand; "but did *you* ever hear or see any thing to terrify you."

"Why, Sir," replied he, "I never go there, because 'tis shut up; but some of the peasants, who have come here of a night, or early in a morning, swear that they have heard strange noises.—For my part, I had no concern in the business, whatever it was; I do no harm to any one, and therefore I live here very quietly; and if there are ghosts there, why I never disturb them, nor they me; I have often wished that strange old man of the rock to live here with us, because the more the merrier; but whether he is afraid of ghosts, or likes his hole in the rock better than a good chamber, I can't tell, but here he won't live, because he says he likes to be alone."

"Here is a fine library—I offer him what books he likes; but two or three will serve him

him for months ; he likes nothing but fishing, and lives upon very little."

" He is a strange worthless being, I think," said Ferdinand, and altogether such a character as I had no idea of ; for he is not a religious man, a man of knowledge, or in any shape desirous of obtaining useful information ; a poor pusillanimous idle creature, that crawls upon the earth, insensible to every thing.

" However, if *he* has *no* curiosity, *I have*, and should like of all things to examine this pavilion."

" You may walk to it, if you can, with all my heart," said the man ; 'tis but a little way detached from the building you see ;—there is a private communication below stairs, but that has long been nailed up.

" By day, Sir, I am sure you may go, because I often pass it, and never heard any thing in my life."

" Well, then," said Ferdinand, " I will take an opportunity to look at it ; you have the keys, I suppose."

"I have, Sir; but the doors have never been opened for more than twelve, aye, more than fourteen years, I believe; therefore I don't suppose the keys will turn now; they hang in the hall, with a ticket to them."

"I shall try them to-morrow," said Ferdinand.

"As you please, Sir," answered he.

But the wife was not quite so easy; she besought him not to go; told several strange stories; declared she had heard odd noises sometimes, when down stairs near the communication passage, and though she trusted in Heaven, and injured no one, yet she would not go into the pavilion for any money.

Ferdinand, who had no fears of supernatural beings, and much curiosity, waited impatiently for the next day; and taking the keys, which the steward had cleaned a little from the rust, he walked to the pavilion;—he was yet but feeble, and when he came to a flight of steps, which led up to the apartments, he seated himself to take breath.

This

This sequestered spot was surrounded by high trees, at the foot of which were a profusion of shrubs and wild flowers; it seemed formed for retirement and contemplation;—but being long and totally neglected, the outside was decaying; the weeds almost obscured the lower apartments; the glass, in many places, was broken; and in short, the whole bore the marks of desolation.

After having rested for some time, Ferdinand prepared to view the inside of this forlorn place; he tried his keys, but found it impossible to turn them.—Vexed and disconcerted, he descended, and walked round among the weeds, when he discovered another small door with a padlock to it, but he had no key that looked likely to open that; he drew near to it, and taking up the lock in his hand with a sort of quick pull, the staple fell out, and directly he heard the sound of a bell, and saw a string was fastened to the staple.—Surprised, he waited a few moments, to see

G. 6.

if.

if any consequence followed the sound of the bell, but all remained still.

This is very singular, thought Ferdinand; and looking round, he observed the weeds seemed to be more broken, as if trodden down; he turned to pull open the door, which resisted his endeavour, and he found must be fastened inside.—He took up the staple, and pulling the string, the bell sounded a second time, and presently a hollow voice was heard, that muttered some inarticulate words, and then groaned.—Though extremely startled at the moment, yet he was convinced the voice was human; that some mystery was attached to the building, and that something more substantial than ghosts or shadowy forms resided there; else why the bell to alarm, and inside fastenings.

Revolving these circumstances in his mind, he made no reply for the present, but determined to watch near that place in the evening. He returned to the steward, repeated the strange account, and his own conjectures;

jectures; but he found it impossible to encourage him in the idea of its being inhabited by living persons; and instead of deriving any help from him to elucidate the mystery, he had only strengthened the steward's apprehensions, and confirmed the report which he had often been inclined to doubt, and think proceeded from the superstition and credulity of the peasants.

No persuasions, therefore, could induce him to accompany Ferdinand in the evening to hide among the trees and make observations; he then applied to the two men who looked after the grounds and cattle, but they were still more terrified.—One of them declared, that oftentimes he had heard groans, and had seen smoke ascending among the weeds, which, however, were never burnt, and therefore it must come from “*the old one's*” house under-ground, where he would take good care never to disturb him.

It was in vain to combat against ignorance and cowardice; therefore Ferdinand saw he must

must make his own discoveries; and his strength not admitting of much exertion to force his way, or even to escape, if such a step should be necessary, he felt extremely perplexed how to proceed.

After several schemes formed and rejected, it suddenly darted into his mind, to wrap himself up in a sheet, outside of which he would throw the steward's great coat, and having a dark lanthorn with him, he could conceal himself among the trees, and if in danger of being discovered, by throwing off the coat, and presenting himself with the light, he had little doubt but that he might frighten those who had endeavoured to terrify others. This plan he prepared to put in execution, heedless and deaf to the prayers and remonstrances of his host and hostess, who gave him up for lost.

Towards the close of the evening, Ferdinand, properly habited, with a tinder box and a dark lanthorn, placed himself among the trees, opposite to this small door, where he could.

could see every transaction without being observed.

Night came on; every thing was still and silent; he began to grow weary of his situation; the castle clock had gone eleven, when suddenly he espied the figures of four people coming through the trees; he could not distinguish their persons, there being no moon. It must be observed, that Ferdinand had replaced the staple and padlock; they made towards the door; he saw them stand, and heard a faint sound of the bell, and in a moment he lost sight of them, and was convinced they were let in through the door.

"Now, then," said he, "the whole is discovered; this is a retreat for robbers, and we shall soon clear the haunted pavilion."

He returned to the castle, to the no small joy of his friends, but he found it impossible to convince them that the persons he described were living ones; they grew more strongly assured that they were wicked spirits, but that Mr. Ferdinand being good, they had

had no power to hurt him. He, provoked at their incredulity, at length asked the steward if it was possible to open the door of communication, which he said led underneath to the pavilion: The other hesitated a long time; but on being urged, said,

“Perhaps it might, as it was nailed up on this side, supposing that the ghosts had not fastened it on the other, as they did the pad-lock door.”

“But,” said the woman, “it would be better to go in the day-time, and force open the front door of the pavilion.”

Ferdinand hesitated and considered.—“If, as I suppose,” said he, “some part of the gang are always in the house, they are doubtless prepared for resistance, and will sell their lives dearly; in forcing the door, some of us may be killed; no, let us discover, if possible, who and what they are, and then we can take measures to surprise them, perhaps without danger.”

The woman shook her head.

“Ah!”

"Ah!" said she, "they are no living folks, I dare say; and it would be better to go by day, when they do not appear."

"But," replied Ferdinand, "that won't do; "I wish to see them *appear*."

He then went down to the passage, which was like the colonade of a cloyster, and saw the door: By the help of an instrument, he drew the screws from the hinges, and with very little noise, opened the door, which discovered a similar passage to the one he was in, but quite dark; he procured his dark lanthorn, and proceeded softly through the passage; lamps were hung on one side, which no doubt were formerly lighted, but all was extremely gloomy and damp.

He came at length to a flight of steps, and hesitated a few minutes whether he should venture to proceed, yet it would be folly to go back so unsatisfied; he had just ascended the first stair, when he heard a loud laughing, as if of two or three persons: He listened—
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the sound seemed to come from no great distance, and he heard voices as if extremely merry.

He continued to ascend with great caution, and entered a sort of lobby, from whence he heard the voices more distinctly; to go forwards alone, he thought would be madness, as he must expect instant death, if discovered. He was now sufficiently assured of what mind the inhabitants were, and proper steps might be taken to secure them through this passage.

He turned, therefore, to make good his retreat; he heard the noise of feet directly over his head, and stepped forwards as quick and softly as possible, blaming his own rashness for advancing so far; he looked for the stairs, in his confusion he had past them; for this lobby went the whole length of the building. Sensible of his error, he was going back, when he heard some one coming down stairs, and the glimmering of a light approaching, he could not advance, but turned his lanthorn
and

and retreated on one side, giving himself up for lost.

A man appeared with a light, and passed so close to Ferdinand, that it was impossible to avoid seeing him; he just snatched a look at him as he started, and, with a groan, fell on the floor.—Though infinitely surprised, he had no time to lose, as the fall and groan must alarm the others; he therefore quickly trod back through the lobby, found the stairs, and, with all the strength he could exert, run through the passage, which, having gained, he ventured not to close the door, but in a moment got up to the stair-case of the castle apartments, and appeared before the steward and his wife so out of breath and agitated, that they both concluded he had seen the ghosts.

When he could speak, he informed them of what he had heard and seen; and so far, said he, are the persons there from being shadowy beings, that I have no doubt, from the fellow's fright, but that he took me for
one;

one; at least I hope he did, as then my progress through the passages will not be discovered.

“And if it is,” said the woman, “then for a certain we shall all be murdered.”

Ferdinand was not perfectly free from the same idea; yet still he thought no time should be lost, to get proper persons to secure those men, who were evidently a gang of banditti.

The steward was persuaded to take a horse, and ride immediately to the next post-town, declare what had happened, and bring a party as private as possible, to seize upon them at night—much against the opinion of the wife, who was for letting them rest quiet, whoever they were, alive or dead, rather than bring themselves into trouble; but at length Ferdinand prevailed, by saying what a great reward they would obtain by taking them.—This consideration a little reconciled her to the absence of her husband; therefore, at day-break, he got his horse, and set off with all haste.

He

He had been gone about three hours, when there was a knocking at the door; Ferdinand was gone to lay down on a sofa in the library; the good woman was alone, the men being about the grounds, and she was afraid to open the door without some one with her; she came to him in the library, and entreated he would have the goodness to come out, and then she would speak from the window, which she did, and asked the person what he wanted; he wished to speak with her husband; he was not at home; could he come in and wait for him, as he had business of consequence to tell him.—Without answering, she drew in her head to ask Ferdinand's opinion; he advanced to the window, and just as he was in view of the man, the fellow started, screamed, attempted to run, but fell on the ground.

Ferdinand hastened out, spoke, and took the man's arm to assist him; he turned, and looking up, discovered the very face of the
servant

servant his brother had sent to attend him back to Baden.

Both were thunderstruck, and for a moment speechless.—The man exclaimed,

“Alive! is it possible—alive!”

“Yes, my good friend,” replied the other, “most wonderfully preserved from death, and I rejoice to see you; for I have often felt much concern for the uncertainty of your fate.”

“Concern for me! Good God! but I see Providence will always bring wicked deeds to light.—Pray, Sir, tell me. Did I see you last night in the lobby of yonder pavilion?”

“I was certainly there,” answered Ferdinand, and frightened a man, I believe—could that be you?”

“It was, Sir; and from that fright, you will now know all; for though I find it was no ghost, as I thought, yet, as I said before, Providence discovers all things, and I will make a free confession.”

“Come

"Come in then," said Ferdinand, "and whatever you have to confess, speak freely, and assure yourself of my pardon, if you have done me any wrong."

He then entered into a long story, which, as the substance of it will be detailed hereafter, it is not necessary to give now; but it concluded with avowing, that he had orders to destroy Ferdinand on the most convenient spot, to avoid a discovery; that he had engaged others to assist him, who were in waiting in the grove at the top of the hill, one of which fired at him, and he being dismounted, as he fell, rolled him over the hill, supposing he must be dead.

That he hastened to his employer, received the sum agreed for, and only yesterday joined his friends; that having among them got a great deal of money and jewels, they proposed to leave off that trade, go over to England, set up for gentlemen, and take to the gaming-table.

This

This scheme they had intended to execute in about ten days time; there were six of them concerned, two of whom always remained in the pavilion; the other four occasionally drest as gentlemen; found out when any travellers of consequence were going on the roads, and then came back, disguised themselves, and plundered where they expected a good booty. Some of his comrades had inhabited that pavilion many years, but he had only joined them lately.

Returning yesterday with his money, which he should not have done, but that he knew his share of their stock was considerably greater than what he possessed, and sure between them of making more money when they pleased, of his employer; he said, they had a feast, and were extremely merry last night, and he was sent down to the cellar for some particular fine wine; going through the lobby, he saw something stand against the wall; going nearer, he saw, as he thought, the

the ghost of Mr. Ferdinand; terror instantly seized him, and he fell into a fit.

The noise he made brought down the others; and when he recovered, so much had conscience overpowered his senses, that he still insisted that he saw him before his eyes, wherever he turned: Some of his friends ridiculed him, but one or two seemed as much terrified as himself.

In short, he went to bed, but could not stay alone; and when he reflected upon all his wickedness, he thought he would go to the castle, and confess the whole; only he did not intend to say he threw the murdered gentleman over the hill, and, as he did not fire at him, he hoped, by impeaching the rest, he should obtain pardon.

Following this resolution, when the other four went out before day-break, and left him and another in bed; he took the advantage of the other, and stole off; came to the castle, but again seeing Ferdinand, concluded

the ghost haunted him, and intended to run away, when his fright threw him down.

This story and discovery so shocked Ferdinand, that he could hardly keep himself from fainting, but he assured the man of his protection, if he would repent of his past life.—This he faithfully promised; but his fears of the ghost having subsided, and his terrors of murder being done away, he already regretted the confession which horror and the fright of the moment had drawn from him.

Ferdinand told him by what means he entered the lobby, and the steps they intended to take that night, to surprise the whole gang, when at table. It was fortunate for him, perhaps, that the two men of the house now entered, and were a check upon the villain, who was inwardly cursing his stars for making him such a terrified coward.

He told Ferdinand they assembled together earlier than usual the last evening, to celebrate his return, but would hardly meet
'till

'till one or two in the morning on this night ; that he thought it best for himself to return, as he could account for his absence, and then he would take care to put aside all instruments of destruction against their appearing, to prevent any harm to Ferdinand and his party.

The unsuspecting Ferdinand praised the man's humanity, and advised him to depart immediately, and expect him about one o'clock. Away he went, cured of his fears, and like a true rogue, finding it most for his interest, he would make a merit of being true to his accomplices, and establish an opinion of his own courage and integrity.

The steward returned, properly accompanied for their intended expedition, and was astonished when informed of the visitor they had in his absence, and not sorry that they should have a friend to prevent mischief.

At the appointed hour, they silently proceeded through the passages, and ascending the stairs, reached the lobby ; all was still ;—

not a voice heard.—This appeared extraordinary; however, two resolute men went before up the stairs to the apartment where Ferdinand had heard them the preceding evening; the door was open; the room empty; chairs, tables, and trunks, all in disorder.—They looked at each other.

“What can this mean?” cried Ferdinand.

They run from room to room, on that floor which was the lower one; then ascended, searched the house through; it was entirely empty, not only of its inhabitants, but of the vast riches the man had boasted of.

“The villain has betrayed us,” said Ferdinand; “they are all off.”

They descended to the cellars, and there found the little door wide open, and all clear. ’Twas now plain they had all taken their flight; and to have discovered and irritated such a band of ruffians, was a very serious business. The steward lamented his interference; he had no doubt but that they would return, and murder every one at the castle.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand was not quite easy, though he seemed to make light of the fears of others, and they returned extremely disconcerted.

That the robbers could not be at any great distance was certain; but there were so many caves and subterranean passages in the hills and rocks adjacent, that it was judged both fruitless and dangerous to trace them, even if they had any clue to guide their search.— They had taken their riches with them; the informer had said, they intended to leave the place, therefore they were now reduced to hope they never might return.

Ferdinand bore all the vexation and mortification of this disappointment, since, had he not been too credulous, he never would have permitted the man to return back, but have retained him as a necessary evidence. He accused his own imprudence, and execrated the wretch whose feigned penitence had deceived him.

CHAP. VII.

THAT night was past without rest by any part of the family at the Castle. Every breath of wind, the least motion of the trees, was magnified into the sound of feet, and murmuring of voices. Day-light at last came, and their terrors began a little to subside; they met dejected and unrefreshed; Ferdinand, ashamed of his credulity, tortured by the recollection of the man's information, and grieved at the painful situation his imprudence had thrown the family into, who had so kindly attended to him, with many other additional causes of inquietude, appeared with a countenance so truly dejected, an
air

air of such anxious concern for them, that instead of affording them any comfort, he more completely alarmed their fears.

He found it impossible to raise his own spirits, or recall to his friends that cheerfulness his folly had deprived them of. On that day or the next, the passage boat was expected; but could he leave them in such a perilous situation, forsake them in the prospect of danger they incurred by complying with his wishes? Impossible, neither honour nor humanity would permit it.

He had written to his friends at Vienna, he had little doubt but that some of them would come to him, at any rate he must remain where he was a few days, and share the danger, or, if contrary to their apprehensions, the robbers should have fled the country, he would then have the satisfaction of leaving them as happy as he found them.

Waving therefore all considerations of self-interest, and repelling the extreme solicitude he felt for returning into Suabia, he frankly

told the steward, "he would not leave them until he saw the event of what they so much dreaded. A day or two (said he) will, I hope, do away all your fears; there is nothing in this Castle to tempt their avarice, and surely they will scarcely neglect their own safety, and hazard a discovery, solely from a desire of revenge." They heard him, and were pleased at the moment; but when fear has taken absolute possession of the mind, hope is but a temporary guest, and is soon clouded with redoubled terrors at the slightest circumstance that justifies their first emotions.

Thus it happened to them, for soon after he had succeeded in raising them from their dismal apprehensions of death and murder, one of the men came in with a small box he had found in the wood just behind the Castle. This box was opened, and, to their infinite surprise, contained a gold watch, three diamond rings, of no very great value, a purse with thirty louis-d'ors, and two embroidered handkerchiefs.

This

"This box was certainly dropped by the robbers," exclaimed the steward; "they are hid in the wood, and when they have secured all their property they will come and be revenged on us." His wife instantly caught the alarm; she cried, and wrung her hands, "lamented the day that ever they had indulged people's curiosity to be their own destruction."

Ferdinand was obliged to give way to the torrent, and remained silent till the turbulence of grief and passion had exhausted itself; then he told them, "he had no doubt but that the gang had dropped the box; at the same time he still believed they were gone from that neighbourhood without any intention of returning, and advised sending the two men at the different post towns to gain intelligence."

But their fears would not let them part with the men beyond sight of the house, and they passed that day and the succeeding night under the same horrors, and with as little

aid

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• rest

rest as the former ones. When the *second* morning came, it brought a return of spirits, and a glimmering of hope, which Ferdinand encouraged, as indeed his own apprehensions were now done away, and therefore the serenity of his aspect gave weight to his words, and had the desired effect of restoring some degree of tranquillity to their minds.

In the course of the day the steward's wife was capable of admiring the contents of the box, and asked, with some *little* earnestness, what was to be done with them, and to whom they must belong?"

"To *you*, undoubtedly," said Ferdinand; "it is impossible to guess at, or to find the owner, as they may have been years in the robber's possession; nor is the value of that magnitude to make them of any mighty consequence to a person, such as we may suppose the owner to have been. The watch and rings you will keep; should any inquiry be made, you can restore them; but the money you may use without scruple."

This

—This opinion of Ferdinand's so exactly corresponded with her's, that in a moment her countenance cleared, and if she had any fears, the loss of her riches was the most predominant one. A tolerable quiet night succeeded, and the third day restored them all to so much composure, that the good woman now praised Ferdinand for his courage in "routing the robbers, and convincing the neighbourhood that no ghosts had lived there."

She was one of those very prudent persons, who, feeling their own interest concerned, chuse always to judge by the event of things in their own favour, without considering the *causes* of the fit, or the unfit.

Matters being thus returned into the accustomed channel with the steward and his family, Ferdinand was impatient to leave them, particularly as he had no letters from Vienna. He wrote a second time to the Count, declaring his intention of going immediately to Baden, and to remain in the house of Mr. Dunloff, until apprised of the Count's and

Mr. D'Allenberg's arrival at their seats.—

That same evening he had the satisfaction to hear, he might embark the next morning for Ulm. He took leave of his hospitable friends with much kindness, and requested to hear from them, should they gain any information of the robbers.

With an eager desire to return, but with the most tormenting ideas and suspicions, that wrung his very soul with sorrow, he entered that boat which was to convey him to his own country, where he was to investigate such events as must realize those suspicions, or involve him in a cloud of doubt for the remainder of his days.

So many, and so various, were the causes that produced sorrow and misery to Ferdinand, that there existed no possibility of future comfort, or any cure for those wounds feverally inflicted by those he had loved.

The weather was favourable, and he was soon landed at Ulm, where, on application to a Gentleman who knew his family, he

was

was furnished with money to pay his passage, and carry him on his journey.

Without meeting any accident on the road, he at length arrived at Baden; but as he drew near to the spot inhabited by his brother, once in the possession of a beloved and revered father, he turned his head from the Castle of Renaud, shrunk with horror from the ideas that crowded on his mind, and, as if blasted by the view, almost flew on to the city, and arrived at the house of Mr. Dunloff sick and breathless.

The good man flew out to receive him: "Heaven be praised!" said he, and seeing his situation he conducted him to a room, making him drink a bumper of wine, which a little restored him.

"Oh! Sir," cried Mr. Dunloff, "Heaven has sent you in a critical minute. Providence often permits the wicked man to triumph for a time, only to make its justice more conspicuous in the punishment of the offender."

"What

“What do you mean?” said Ferdinand:—

“Tell me, how are my dear children?”

“Do not grieve to be told, Sir, that your little daughter is in Heaven. Master Charles is well, and every thing the fondest father can wish him to be. Your little girl has been recalled to its native skies about a fortnight since, no care was wanting, but a weak constitution sunk under the malady of the measles, and—she is at rest.”

Seeing Ferdinand was affected, he went on to divert his ideas into another source.—

“You must prepare your mind, Sir, for a shocking and interesting discovery, my uncle —.”

“The good Ernest?” cried Ferdinand.—

“I am ungrateful not to have asked for him. He is wonderfully recovered, Heaven has heard his prayers, and prolonged his life to see the completion of his wishes. Ah! Sir, your brother—“What of him?” said Ferdinand, starting at the name—“is in a state of distraction; for this week past he raves incessantly;

cessantly ; he has deeply injured you, and now all is discovered."

"Has he then confessed, is it possible it can be true, that he hired a villain to murder me? But before I hear more (said he) let me see my poor Charles." Mr. Dunloff, who stood in an attitude of wild amazement, started, and rung the bell. The lovely boy soon appeared, and flew into the arms of his father. His features were too like the deceased Claudina's not to make Ferdinand's heart bleed at the recollection; he pressed him to his bosom, and for a few moments the tender feelings of nature precluded speech.

Dunloff, who was impatient to explain every thing of so much importance, besought him to let Charles retire for the present. —

The other consented in silence, when the tutor said, "Your last words, Sir, overpowered me! Is it possible the Count can have proceeded to such terrible lengths as your question seemed to imply?"

“ I hope not (said Ferdinand) for gladly would I believe the villain wronged him.” —

“ Before I request a more explicit account of this alarming business, let me send to my uncle, and rejoice him with the news of your safe arrival.”

“ I understood (said Ferdinand) that he had quitted my brother —.”

“ Yes, Sir, but the Countess sent for him again when the Count was seized with this dreadful disorder of his senses.”

Mr. Dunloff being returned into the room, after he had dispatched a messenger, respectfully entreated Ferdinand to explain those words which had so greatly shocked him. — He very readily took up his story from the arrival of his brother's messenger to the present hour, repeating the particulars which the assassin had told him in his momentary fit of penitence.

During this recital Mr. Dunloff expressed the utmost surprise and horror. — “ How true is the observation (exclaimed he) that one
crime

crime leads to a thousand others, and that when a man has made his mind familiar with guilt, he proceeds on to the most detestable actions, and plunges headlong into the blackest enormities ! Gracious Heaven ! that jealousy and avarice should gradually tend to robbery and murder !

“ I would prepare you, Sir, for the scenes you must witness, and the shocking discovery that will wound every feeling of your heart ; but I know not where or how to begin, the packet must speak for itself.”

“ What packet ? ” demanded Ferdinand.

“ It was written and delivered by Madam Claudina to my uncle, with a strict charge not to deliver it to you till after her death, and then you was to have it without delay.

“ This packet my uncle entrusted, sealed up, to me for you, lest death should suddenly cut him off, and his papers fall under the inspection of his master. When Madam Claudina was seized with her last illness, the consequence of the general report, and belief of
your

your death, for it threw her into fits that at last occasioned the termination of her existence. She wrote a letter to Count Rhodophil, conjuring my uncle to deliver it himself, and at the same time permitted him to open the packet entrusted for you, to read it, and keep the bond enclosed for the benefit of her son.

“ She expired in true penitence for her sins, and I humbly hope the Almighty will extend his mercy towards her. My uncle, borne down with sorrow for your supposed death, though he would sometimes indulge a hope against all apparent probability, was so overcome with the sad scene of her last hour, that he fell ill, and could not attend on the Count; I was commissioned to do it, and accordingly waited upon him: I found him in high spirits, the Countess in the room.

“ I had only sent in my name: I took the letter from my pocket, which had been superscribed by my uncle, and delivered it. He broke the seal, and opened it; instantly his colour

colour changed, his hands trembled, and his whole frame was agitated."

"Bless me, Sir (said the Countess) what ails you?" The hypocrite struggled to recover himself; he falteringly told her, "it was a letter that announced the death of an old friend, whom he was grieved to lose."

"I thank you, Sir (said he to me;) be so good to tell your uncle I shall call at his apartment, and ask how he does by and bye."

To give you an idea of his confusion and tremulous voice is impossible. The Countess looked extremely surprised: I gave him a penetrating glance, and withdrew.

The next morning he saw my uncle; he first soothed him, and tried to get the packet Claudina had given him; but in vain were persuasions and threats, for he at length told him it was not in his possession. This highly irritated him; many words passed, which ended in his bidding my uncle to leave his house.—

Nothing could be more impolitic, knowing
how

how much he was in his power; but he trusted to the honour of a man he treated ill, and soon repented of his behaviour.

That night my uncle was removed to this house; the Count heard of it, and met him as he was carrying out. He pressed him to turn back.

"No, Sir," said he, "an old and faithful servant can be turned out but *once*.—You fear me, and therefore you hate me; but I never shall disturb the peace of your family." My uncle continued a long time in a fluctuating way, which at last turned to a fit of the gout, and held him many weeks.

During this time your letter came, I could scarcely credit my senses when I saw the address, and prepared my uncle well as I could; but indeed he almost expired with joy when I presented it to him. The next day, Peter, the Count's man, called "to ask after Mr. Ernest," he said; but I believe to observe whether we had received a letter, which was made no secret of.—"This will
be

be bad news to somebody," said he, and withdrew not much pleased I thought.

A few days after he called again; the Count, he said, was very low spirited, eat nothing, and he believed was going fast. He talks of sending for his brother to make his peace with him before he dies.—Indeed! (said my uncle) well, then I shall think he *does* repent; my poor master *must know all*, for I pledged myself to deliver Madam Claudina's letter after her death.—Peter said it would be better not, it would only make Mr. Ferdinand unhappy. Away he went, and a day or two after we heard you were sent for.

About a week ago Peter came again in a violent hurry; his master was desperately ill in a bad fever, seized the day before, just after writing a letter to Vienna to Mr. Ferdinand's friends, to know why he did not come as he expected. That night the fever grew worse, he was light-headed, and talked at random, often called for his brother and Ernest, therefore the Countess begged my
uncle

uncle would come to the Castle. He was but poorly, yet thought it his duty to go, and has remained there from that time.

Your brother still continues in a deplorable way, sometimes furious, at other times melancholy, and has made such discoveries of his crimes, as though they must prove beneficial to you, yet, will, I am sure, give you an infinite deal of pain, I mean with respect to the will he destroyed, and which your father, the late Count Renaud, made a few days before his death.

"Is it possible," cried Ferdinand, "and was I remembered in that will?"

"Yes, Sir, he gave you his blessing, and pardoned all your undutiful conduct, and persevering obstinacy, and left a handsome fortune to your children."

Before Ferdinand could reply, so greatly was he agitated, the messenger returned from Ernest, and Ferdinand was desired to hasten to the Castle. He obeyed the summons, and was first conducted to the Countess; they met

met with a little confusion on both sides; she was greatly affected.

“Your unhappy brother (said she) has, within the last two hours, been restored to his reason; the physicians say it is the last effort of nature, and bespeaks approaching death: He has been informed of your arrival; much caution was used to break it to him, but he bore it without any great emotion. He said he wished to be private with Ernest, and I withdrew. Now I will inform him you are here.”

Ferdinand, was so inexpressibly shocked, and so reluctant to see a man in the agonies of death, whose life had been so culpable, that when the Countess returned in tears, and besought him to hasten into the room, his legs trembled under him, and with great difficulty he tottered into the apartment, where a sight met him sufficiently dreadful to appal the stoutest resolution.

Rhodophil was supported by pillows, his face long, pale, and distorted, his eyes wildly rolling

rolling then on Ernest, who supported him on one side, as Peter did on the other, and then throwing them upwards with an earnest supplicating stare. Ferdinand stopped a moment irresolute whether to proceed or not.—Rhodophil's eye dropping, fixed on him, "Save me! save me! (he cried) he comes to strike daggers to my soul!"

"Compose yourself, Sir (said Ernest.)—Ferdinand advanced to the bed, the scene before him, the horrors of his brother's mind penetrated to his heart. He threw himself on his knees, "I beseech you, Rhodophil, to be composed, to *forgive yourself*; Heaven is my witness, that of whatsoever nature, and however great, are the injuries you have done me, *I forgive you*, and most earnestly pray that Heaven may extend its mercy towards you."

"You know not what you say (cried he, looking wildly on his brother;) my crimes are beyond pardon, cannot be forgiven, here or hereafter."

"And

"And who shall dare to limit the mercy of Heaven?" said Ferdinand; "the magnitude of your crimes may deserve punishment, but what can exceed the torments you now feel?"

"O, it is horror indeed!" cried the wretched man: "Let the guilty look on me and tremble, foul deeds will come to light; see, see, there is Claudina calling on me, imprecating curses on my head, me, the seducer of innocence, the destroyer of my brother's honour."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Ferdinand, and sunk on the floor. This sight threw Rhodophil into ravings: "Now, now, I have murdered him again! See! how the blood streams, it covers me, hide, hide me, from his blood!" During this dreadful paroxysm they had recovered Ferdinand, and placed him in a chair by the bedside. He viewed the guilty Rhodophil with averted looks of mingled horror and compassion.

He again recovered a temporary interval of reason on seeing his brother raised from the floor: "Ferdinand (said he) I have been a most atrocious villain—I have ever deceived and betrayed you; my father's spirit, for I have heard *his voice* more than once, has warned, has upbraided me, for my crimes: Hark! hark! I hear him now. O, pardon! pardon!" Again he fell into ravings, till again exhausted, by the use of cordials, reason weakly returned. At this moment Ernest fell on his knees: "Do you, Sir, pardon *me*, and compose your spirits—it was *my voice* that has occasionally alarmed you."

"How!" cried Ferdinand, "was it *your* voice that addressed itself to me?"

"I confess it, Sir," said Ernest, "I had many suspicions, and some proofs that you were most unfairly dealt with; excluded from my good master's sight long before he died, by misrepresentations, I could gain no access to him either in person or by letter. I had heard much, but not enough to found proofs upon,

upon, nor would *my* single testimony avail. I saw your misery and despair when cut off from all hope of a last forgiveness. I concealed myself in a closet, and in the agony of the moment, the words I pronounced, you thought proceeded from the dead body of your father. Heaven forgive me, if I did wrong; but it tranquillized *your* mind, and that was my only object.

“Twice afterwards I made use of the same device; the last time, the deceit was surely meritorious, for *then* I was master of a secret that froze me with horror; but to spare *you*, I had recourse to that method of warning you from——.”

“O, Heavens!” said Ferdinand, “what a black scene of iniquity opens before me! Unhappy man!” cried he, violently agitated; “What indeed must be the torture of your mind!” Rhodophil gasped for breath, every feature seemed convulsed, he struggled for speech.

“ Pray for me, pray for the wretch who cannot pray for himself.” — More cordials were administered, and a temporary strength returned : “ Now, now, I can speak ; I always hated you,” said he, hastily addressing Ferdinand ; I sought to warp our father’s mind against you, and pretended love to wound more deeply.

“ I saw and loved Claudina ; I tried to buy her of Dupree through an agent ; she loved you ; my offers were rejected. In revenge I persuaded you to marry, knowing *that* would ruin you with your father. *I* informed him of it. He disbelieved it. He sent for you ; all was discovered, and you drove from the house.

“ *I* intercepted every letter, and represented you careless of his affection, and deficient both in love and duty, yet I pleaded with him to forgive you when I had worked him to a pitch of fury that made him outrageous.

“ *I*

“ I kept Ernest from his confidence, by assuring him he had encouraged you. Under these impressions, one day, in a great fury, he made a will in my favour; but I believe grief, for your supposed neglect of him, preyed upon his mind, he fell into a swift decay.

“ I told him you knew of his illness, but never inquired for him; once or twice Ernest petitioned for you, but he disregarded him.

“ A week before his death he one day called me to his bed—‘ Tell the ungrateful Ferdinand (said he) that on my death-bed I forgive him: I revoke a curse that has preyed upon *my* spirits; may Heaven forgive his unnatural behaviour, *as I do.*’

“ The next day he sent for his lawyer; I was alarmed; the lawyer was from home, the clerk came; he would make a new will, he did so: I pretended to rejoice at it. He left your children his estate in Bavaria, and you a thousand crowns a year, with the small farm on the skirts of the Forest; also an annuity to Ernest of two hundred crowns.

“ Those bequests were not much in comparison to what I became heir to, but it made you independent, and that was death to me.

“ I founded the clerk ; I found him fit for my purpose ; he was friendless and venal. The will was destroyed. I kept every one from the room till my father expired ; the rest you know.

“ Then to complete my revenge I had you at the Castle.

“ I poisoned the mind of Claudina ; I told a thousand falsehoods ; you assisted my designs by going to the army ; I made her believe you repented of your marriage, which occasioned your melancholy ; in short I succeeded, I corrupted her mind, and dishonoured her person.

“ Revenge was complete—she was pregnant—you returning—I sought to persuade her to destroy the child—she was taken ill—miscarried—and all we thought was well.

“ You returned ; *the voice*, which *she* thought supernatural, threw her into horrors. She

She sent for Ernest, confessed she had wronged you, and, having sworn *him* to secrecy, got him to procure her escape.

“ I had reason to fear Ernest, therefore did not dare to discharge him. My mind was always distracted, terror and guilt my constant companions, for I always dreaded a discovery.

“ The clerk who had made the will went into Austria—he spent the money in dissipation—joined with a set of gamblers—frequently made demands upon me for money, accompanied with threats.

“ At length news arrived of your death ; then I thought my misery at an end, and my fears all done away. One only trouble remained : I had married solely that you nor your children should be benefitted after my death : My wife seemed not likely to have children ; your boy must inherit, that distracted me ; I could not come at him, he was too well taken care of, and I was still in the power of Ernest during the life of Claudina.

“ Happily, as I thought, she died soon after ; but her letter spoke daggers to my soul, and made me fearful of my own shadow.

“ Whilst I was struggling with this imbecility of mind, came an account of your being still in existence which rendered me desperate, and resolve on your death as the only chance of escaping shame and punishment, Claudina having informed me that she had left a packet for you, confessing all her crimes.

“ I wrote to the man who had before but too well served me, and held out such advantages, promised such a sum as I knew he would not resist, and when he had completed your destruction, he was to meet me at Ulm, and receive his reward.

“ I made an excuse of business to go there, and wait the event. He came, assured me that you was murdered, and thrown into the river ; and added, that being associated with a set of men, who were both gamblers and robbers, it was their intention on his return
to

to leave the country with their booty, and go into England, and as banditti were known to infest those mountains, it would be generally believed both you and him had been plundered and murdered.

"I hugged myself in security, gave him the promised reward, returned home, and pretended to be uneasy that you did not arrive: I believed myself safe from a discovery, when the avenging hand of Heaven was uplifted to overwhelm me with the punishment due to my crimes.

"Eternal justice preserved *you*, and the day of retribution is at hand; a life of deceit, crimes and falsehoods, will soon be terminated *here*, and my soul trembles for its doom *hereafter*."

C H A P. VIII.

THUS ended the confession of the wretched guilty Rhodophil, which was not made without many breaks, pauses, and frequent refreshments, to enable him to proceed in the dreadful story; but we would not notice them to interrupt the narrative.

Ferdinand sat fixed in the chair; his eyes rivetted on his brother, or occasionally thrown up to Heaven; he shuddered with horror, but spoke not a single word.

When the story was concluded, and the miserable object before him lay gasping for
3 breath,

breath, he clasped his hands, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Gracious father!" said he, "extend *thy* mercy to this unhappy man; may the long torment conscious guilt has inflicted—may the unspeakable terrors of a distracted mind plead in mitigation of his crimes; and may his sufferings obtain the same forgiveness from Heaven, which, with my whole soul, I accord to him here."

To this fervent address, Ernest pronounced an amen.—The wretched man seemed inwardly to join in prayer; he lay exhausted and speechless; the effort he had made during the confession of his crimes, reduced him to the last extremity; nor could he utter a single word for some time.

At length he wished to be alone with Ernest: Ferdinand, with tottering steps, reached the antichamber, and sunk on a sofa, overpowered by the recollection of what he had heard, and hardly believing it possible

human nature could be debased by such deliberate malice and unheard of wickedness.

He remained for three hours alone ; for he could not see any one, but was at length again summoned to the sick chamber ; Rhodophil had again recovered speech, and besought him once more to pronounce him forgiven, and to join Ernest in prayers for him to Heaven.

Poor—poor Rhodophil ! On the bed of death, with all the horrors of a guilty conscience, who can describe thy feelings ; what lethean draught can silence the inward monitor, that now shrinks trembling from the view of futurity !!!

Most fervent were the prayers they offered to the throne of mercy ; he seemed to have a temporary calmness, and at last dropped into a slumber. Ferdinand was persuaded to withdraw ; the Countess had ordered a bed for him ; he gladly retired to it for a few hours, to recover his spirits.

The

The night passed without any change ;— Rhodophil dosed, started, and often waked in great horror, but his senses were not much deranged. In the morning Ferdinand entered the room just as he had desired to see his Countess ; they met at his bedside ; he spoke very inwardly, and with much difficulty of respiration, he entreated her pardon for many acts of unkindness and inattention ; owned his motives for marrying her were her large fortune, and the hope of an heir to prevent Ferdinand or his son from succeeding him.

He praised and blessed her.—Then taking Ferdinand's hand, he feebly prest it,

" *Be her friend,*" said he.—" May Heaven bless *you*, and pardon me.—See the end of guilt and duplicity.—*Truth and innocence only* can make a death-bed easy.—The virtuous man looks forward with hope ; the guilty one with fear and trembling—Heaven have mercy on me !!! "

Those

Those were the last words he spoke.— Violent convulsive hiccups soon came on, which drove the Countess and Ferdinand to their respective apartments, unable to support the last struggle of nature; and in less than a quarter of an hour, the latter was informed the dreadful scene had closed!!!

Thus then expired the unhappy Rhodophil, only seven and twenty years of age.— Ferdinand requested Ernest and Mr. Dunloff to take the management of every thing upon themselves, for he was incapable of giving directions; he entreated them to let the confession of the wretched Rhodophil rest in their own bosoms, and, if possible, never to hint a word relative to the story, on any occasion whatever. This they faithfully promised; and at his request, Mr. Dunloff undertook to write for him to Count M—— and his friends, directing them at the Count's castle; and if he was not arrived, to have them forwarded to Vienna.

We

We will now look back on the friends of Ferdinand, who were suffering the most painful inquietude on his account. The day preceding the one appointed by them to leave Vienna, the Count called on Heli at the interpreter's, and, to his surprise, found him preparing to leave Germany in a few days.

"I was coming to you," said he; a great revolution has taken place in my affairs;—the Grand Seigneur is dead; his successor was the friend of our family; my uncle is appointed to a place of much eminence, and I shall return to my own country without fear, and sure of preferment.

"Your bounty to me, therefore, I intended to resign, and only request a sufficient sum to carry me safe into Constantinople.—I go with joy, for I like neither your country or customs; and the women I detest.

"The ungrateful Fatima will have cause to repent her desertion of me, now I might have placed her at the head of a hundred women,

women, perhaps ; but no matter, I shall soon find others to please and console me."

The Count was not sorry to hear of this change in Heli's hopes and circumstances ;— he assured him of their ready concurrence to his wishes, and took leave of him to get the business immediately settled. They also procured the liberty of the man who had been detained as a witness against Fatima, as after a fruitless search, they had given up any farther inquiry.

On the following day, Mr. d'Allenberg, his daughter, Louisa, the Countess of Wolfran, the two Barons, and the Count M——, accompanied by their servants, left Vienna, determined to proceed through Lintz, and make some inquiries after Ferdinand. The ladies were entirely unacquainted with their apprehensions for his safety, and supposed him with his brother.

As they stopt at the same inn Ferdinand had rested in, they were quickly informed of his leaving Lintz on the very day he had written to them, and, in their course of inquiries,

quiries, learnt that a band of robbers sometimes infested the neighbouring hills and woods, which made it extremely hazardous for passengers, and therefore the landlord persuaded the company to go the lower road, as having less woods to travel through.

This account made them excessively apprehensive that Ferdinand had unhappily fallen in with the gang, and had been murdered. The Count accused himself incessantly, and protested, that, should any accident have befallen his friend, he never should enjoy peace more, or forgive himself, for not insisting upon going with him.—The Barons were extremely concerned; Mr. d'Allenberg overpowered with sorrow.

His extreme dejection, and the inquietude not to be concealed, which pervaded the countenance of Count M——, alarmed the ladies, and Miss d'Allenberg earnestly inquired of her father the cause of so visible a disorder.—He tried to evade her curiosity, but only augmented it, because perfectly as-
sured

fured he *was* uneasy, his endeavours to hide it from her, proved it was a matter of some consequence; she therefore caught the infection of her father's looks, and though she ceased to importune him, she saw there was some affliction preparing for her, which he was unwilling to communicate.

The Countess and Louisa were not more composed; each thought the painful secret must concern herself, and were equally unhappy.

A general air of concern pervaded through the whole party, and every one seemed to avoid particular conversation, though the Count, impressed with the idea that Miss d'Allenberg viewed him with some degree of preference, which indeed was justified by her behaviour to him; exerted all his endeavours to assume a tranquillity far distant from his heart, that he might not communicate his uneasiness to her: But the disguise was too flimsy to succeed, and only the more strongly convinced

convinced her that something lay hid, that would not bear investigation.

Mr. d'Allenberg had a small estate at Augsburg; he proposed to his friends going there, and sending off an express to Count Rhodophil, also, another to Mr. Dunloff.— This proposal met their approbation; the Barons could not resolve to separate themselves from the party, until some intelligence was gained to remove or confirm their present conjectures.

The ladies made no opposition; they frankly avowed to each other the painful suspense which tortured their imaginations, and anxiously sought for some clue to elucidate the mystery, but it was plain they must wait for the discovery.

They proceeded on to Augsburg, a very unsocial party, and arrived there without any accident: Being unexpected, they were not presently, or comfortably accommodated, but they were not fastidious, and bore inconveniences without repining.

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The same night of their arrival, two messengers were procured; letters written and sent off: One of them was ordered to proceed on to the Count's estate, if he obtained no satisfactory answer from Mr. Dunloff.—The gentlemen took a walk in the garden after this business had been expedited. There was a small pavilion of two rooms, each opening into, and fronting different walks, with a communication door between them.

The gentlemen entered one of these rooms and sat down.

"I am convinced," said the Count, as if continuing a conversation—"I am convinced, that if we do not gain satisfactory information from the return of the expresses, it will be impossible to impose longer on the sagacity of the ladies, already so much alarmed; we cannot dissemble our inquietude, and the dreadful certainty of what we fear, if unhappily it proves such, *must* be known to them at last."

"True."

“ True,” answered Mr. d’Allenberg;—
“ but whilst there exists a possibility that Ferdinand lives, I would not wound them by our ———.”

He had not time to finish the sentence;—an exclamation of “ Help, help,” from the adjoining room, caused them to pull open the door, where they beheld Miss d’Allenberg on the floor, the Countess and Louisa endeavouring to raise her.

They flew to her assistance; she was cold and senseless; what a sight for a father!—Poor Mr. d’Allenberg was in agonies: The young Baron, more collected, had hastened to the house, and returned with drops and water, which, on applying, she shewed signs of returning life, and was raised and placed on two chairs, Louisa supporting her in her arms.

She opened her eyes, and saw the whole group standing round her, her father holding her hand between his trembling ones.

“ Ah!”

“ Ah !” said she, “ Ferdinand is then dead !”

“ Not so, I hope, my dear Theresa,” replied he tenderly.

“ Dying, if not dead,” returned she, “ the dreadful certainty will soon arrive—A *second time* to feel this blow—alas ! ’tis too, too much to bear.”

Mr. d’Allenberg and the ladies besought her to retire into the house ; she submitted in silence to their wishes, and was supported through the garden ; the Count remained rooted to the spot, inconceivably astonished at a discovery so little expected.

“ What an unfortunate adventure,” said Baron Reiberg, “ that we should be overheard ; I had not the smallest idea of Miss d’Allenberg’s attachment to our friend.”

“ Nor I, I promise you,” returned the Count, trying to recover from his surprise ; nor I am sure had Ferdinand.”

“ But if he lives,” said the Baron, “ as he is now a disengaged man, I hope the young lady

lady will be happy; for she is a most charming young woman."

"Indeed she is," replied the Count;—"Heaven grant my friend may be alive; the rest we must leave to Providence."

They returned to the house, not a little disconcerted that accident had revealed what they had so industriously sought to conceal.

Mean-time, Mr. d'Allenberg found it requisite, for the peace of his daughter, to enter into a full explanation of their hopes and fears; disguise would no longer avail to impose upon her, and he candidly laid every thing before her.

When he had concluded, and again mentioned *hope*,

"My dear Sir," said she, interrupting him, with a solemnity of look and accent, that penetrated to his heart—"my dear Sir, do not attempt to delude me with *hope*; rather seek to strengthen my mind, and fortify it to expect the worst. I always told you, because I always felt, that the preference I entertained

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ed for that unfortunate young man would terminate unhappily.

“It was the soft melancholy of his air, the tuneful accents of his voice, and the effusions of a bright understanding and pleasing vivacity, which now and then broke through the cloud that seemed to overcast his mind: It was those affecting appearances that stole insensibly into my heart, and to see Ferdinand was to pity him; pity soon ripened into esteem and affection, and now there is an end of all.”

“Do not decide so peremptorily,” said her father; “*hope* may still exist.”

“You once before told me so, Sir,” returned she; “but I have never listened to the flatterer; yet I had brought my mind to a comparative degree of content, when he was so unexpectedly restored to us; not that I could ever flatter myself with his esteem, nor circumstanced as he was, ought I to have wished for it.”

“Dear I

"Dear Theresa," said Mr. d'Allenberg, "those circumstances are changed; he has lately lost his wife, from whom he was parted."

"Why would you tell me so, to enhance my distress? Oh! my dear father, my Louisa, assist me to derive courage from the extent of my misfortunes; teach me to submit to the dispensations of Providence, that I may not cloud the last days of a beloved parent with sorrow, by an imprudent attachment."

Her father embraced her with streaming eyes, entreating her not to give way to despair, though he could hardly bid her to indulge hope. He retired and left her with the ladies, and in the evening she appeared at supper with them.

The gentlemen were agreeably surprised; she tried to eat, though she could not swallow three mouthfuls; she endeavoured to speak, to smile, but it was a smile of woe that shocked every one present; but her efforts were astonishing to her father, and convinced

him of the dignity of her mind, and what struggles she was capable of, to afford him peace.

Four days of painful suspense they had endured, in which the delicate frame of Miss d'Alenberg seemed to be falling a sacrifice to the strength of her mind, and the assumption of a fortitude her spirits but ill supplied. They were sitting at the dinner table when the return of a messenger was announced; she turned faint and sick.

"I will retire, if you please," said she to her father, and accompanied by her two friends, tottered out of the room.

With difficulty, they preserved her from fainting.

"I shall soon know the *worst*," said she, "and that is some degree of ease from this dreadful uncertainty. If he lives, I am indifferent as to *myself*; for where there is no expectation, there can be no disappointment."

Her trembling frame spoke the agitations of her heart, when suddenly the door opened,
and

and Mr. d'Allenberg appeared with an animated countenance.

"*He lives,*" she exclaimed; and leaning her head on the bosom of Louisa, burst into a flood of tears, the first she had shed for three days.

"*He does,* my dear Theresa; a letter from Mr. Dunloff has restored us all to happiness.

He lives, indeed, wonderfully preserved, and arrived only two days before the messenger.—His brother had expired that day, and therefore both men went to Dunloff's, who quickly sent one back with intelligence so much desired; the other is gone on to Count M——'s, to give notice of his return."

Mr. d'Allenberg might have proceeded for an hour; his beloved daughter heard nothing, thought of nothing, but "*Ferdinand is alive; yes, that amiable and unfortunate young man is the care of Heaven; his life is preserved!!!*"

"Will you not come down, my Theresa, and hear read, or read yourself, this charm-

ing letter? We shall pursue our journey to-morrow, if you are capable of bearing the fatigue."

"Yes," said she, starting up; "let me hear the letter, dear Sir—how good you are."

She descended to the parlour, where Mr. Dunloss's letter was presented to her; she devoured the contents with great avidity, and joined, with astonishing composure, in the mutual congratulations they made each other, for the completion of their wishes.

The next morning they left Augsburg.—The two Barons resolved to attend them to Ulm, as they made that in their route to drop the Countess, who engaged, the moment she had settled her affairs, to bring her son with her, and spend some weeks at Mr. d'Allenberg's. The Barons took leave of her there; but young Reiberg so earnestly importuned his father, that he might be permitted to accompany his friend the Count, that

that the old gentleman consented, and also engaged to join them very soon.

They all proceeded to the Count's mansion, as being nearest to Ferdinand; arrived there without any accident, and immediately sent a servant, with letters to Castle Renaud.

Those letters reached Ferdinand just as he returned from the funeral of his brother.—

What delightful sensations sprung to his heart, when he found his friends were so near to him; he thought his obligations to them superseded the cold forms of decorum in circumstances like his, therefore, sending for his faithful old Ernest, he requested Mr. Dunloff and his son would come to the castle, and remain with him during his absence.

He had entreated the Countess to remain there, and command, as usual; but she declined the offer, and the day preceding the funeral, had removed to the house of a friend, until one of her own was ready to receive her. She had a good estate of her own, and a very handsome settlement from Rhodophil.

Ferdinand detained the messenger, that he might accompany him, and agreeably surprise his friends.—When he was announced, they could hardly credit the information;—all started up, and, in a moment, he received the embraces of his three friends: The ladies were present; Miss d'Allenberg behaved like a heroine; she said little, but that little was extremely proper.

At length he was quietly seated; they asked him a hundred questions in a breath.

“Spare me at present,” said he; “I wish not to remember unpleasant scenes now, when I am so perfectly happy.”

He certainly thought himself so at that moment; but soon after, when in conversation, he beheld Miss d'Allenberg speaking with some attention to the Count—Ah! thought he, how unfortunate, that such a charming young woman should encourage a hopeless passion.—Then the numberless little incidents in which he had admired her, came to his recollection; he watched her attentively;

tively; thought her more beautiful than ever, and again sighed that the Count was precluded from rendering her happy.

He was so lost in thought, and absorbed in attention towards them, that Mr. d'Allenberg was obliged to remind him that he had not once asked for the lovely Countess.

"Forgive me," said he; "I have the highest respect for that estimable woman, but I have my excuse before me. When looking at those ladies, is it possible to recollect any others.—I hope, however, you left that amiable lady well."

"Perfectly so," said Reiberg; "and 'tis only in this company that I can pardon your omission."

Ferdinand had always so carefully avoided saying even a gallant thing to a lady, that the little compliment he uttered caught the attention of Miss d'Allenberg; she looked at him; he withdrew his eyes, and fixed them on Louisa, to whom he addressed some trifling question, that called the blood from

the cheeks of the other, and she again turned towards the Count.

He was a minute observer of the scene, and instantly thought he understood the recesses of Ferdinand's heart better than he did himself. Nor was the Count mistaken.

The very first day Ferdinand had seen Miss d'Allenberg, he was charmed with her humanity, and generous compassion for Louisa.—The sentiments she uttered were so congenial to his own feelings, that her character was instantly decided in his breast to be a worthy one. He felt exceedingly for the base duplicity of Count Wolfran's conduct, and rejoiced that such a woman had not fallen a victim to it.

When at her father's house, she seemed still more worthy of admiration; the study, the chief pleasure of her life, was to obey and contribute to his amusement.—She was sensible without affectation; cheerful without levity; attentive to every part of domestic management, without the least ostentation:
Added

Added to which, her polite kindness to Louisa denoted a mind above the idea of *conferring* favours, but was herself the obliged person, in being permitted to offer them.

Such was the character of Miss d'Allenberg.—He admired, he revered her; but at that time, the recent unaccountable troubles that hung over him; his affection for Claudina, which, though weakened, was not extinguished, and his peculiar situation, impeded every thought of Miss d'Allenberg, otherwise than as a most estimable young woman.

But when the Count and himself had so fortunately met with Louisa, the story she related of her friend's melancholy and secret attachment, the dormant admiration of her person and mind, again blazed forth; he felt the sincerest concern for her situation, not entirely unmixed with envy, for the man who was the object of her preferable regard.—

This object, his sagacity at length discovered to be Count M——, and he also was convinced the unfortunate partiality was a mu-

tual one. Here then he sighed in silence, as he thought in pity to them, and in that pity stifled his own regrets.

When he received an account of Claudina's death, he was greatly affected; her ill conduct, though plainly avowed, had not effaced her image from his heart, or eradicated the tenderness which was once reciprocal.—He lamented her death; he grieved for her depravity; but his sorrow was not of that deep heart-felt kind, which he must have felt in other circumstances, because reason whispered to his mind that she had proved unworthy.

When Mr. d'Allenberg and his daughter arrived at Vienna, and he waited upon them, he saw, as he judged, a confirmation of his suspicions of the unfortunate preference that young lady entertained for the Count, and without being sensible of it himself, he certainly exhibited some little petulance in his conversation, which did not pass unobserved.

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He was then sent for to his brother, and his agitations on that account superseded all other ideas. The subsequent events pretty much engrossed his mind; and it was not until his present arrival at the Count's, when he saw Miss d'Allenberg with circumstances so much altered in his own favour, that the sentiments he had long suppressed, and was scarcely conscious of, now burst full upon him, mingled with the painful regret that his friend, possessed that invaluable heart he thought above all price; and from his unfortunate situation, was precluded from even a wish to profit by the preference he was honoured with, and of course both must be unhappy.

Thus have we accounted for the workings of Ferdinand's mind, and for those sentiments which now, for the first time, were no longer concealed from himself.

Louisa made her own observations in silence.—Her friend, who saw the direction of Ferdinand's eyes, and felt the little com-

pliment that had escaped him, immediately gave Louisa the credit of it.

"Yes," said she, mentally, "I see the attraction, and now there exists, on either side, no obstacles to impede their union.—Well, then, I will teach my heart to rejoice in their happiness, and henceforth draw only on my dear father for my future tranquillity. Impressed with this idea, she turned her eyes tenderly towards her father, and saw an expression of joy in his, that greatly surprised her, but which she immediately attributed to the pleasure of seeing his friend.

In the evening, the company walked into the gardens, and strolling through the shrubbery, they accidentally fell into small parties.—Louisa designedly led her friend from the company, and seemed to be in very uncommon spirits; Miss d'Allenberg thought it was not *quite so decorous*; but she allowed for the human heart; and a conquest, such as Ferdinand, justified the little breach of delicacy towards a friend.

"You are more than usually cheerful, my dear Louisa?"

"Indeed I am; the arrival of our friend has gratified my warmest wishes."

"May every wish of your heart be realized; you may suppose *I* do not feel less pleasure, though his presence is not of that immediate consequence to me, as to my dear Louisa."

"Indeed," cried the other, at once penetrating into the nature of her feelings, "indeed, have you then changed your favourable opinion of Ferdinand, since he is become a *widower* and a *Count*?"

"No," said Miss d'Allenberg, a little piqued; but I hope I have fortitude and generosity sufficient to change the nature of my sentiments in favour of my friends."

"I see," returned Louisa, "that you suspect the new Count has a partiality for me."

"It *was* a suspicion," said the other; "but his behaviour this day amounts to a confirmation; and believe me, my dear Louisa, weak as you have seen me in many instances,

I have acquired that command over my feelings, now that I see him alive and happy; that I am enabled to partake in your mutual felicity, though, for a time, perhaps I should not chuse to be an *eye-witness* of it."

"Generous friend," exclaimed Louisa, kissing her hand, "I know the sincerity of your heart, and doubt not but that the nobleness of your mind would support you under the most *painful* disappointment, if productive of happiness to those you love: But undeceive yourself, my beloved Theresa, Ferdinand respects me as the *friend* of Miss d'Allenberg; but my amiable Theresa is the sole possessor of his *heart*."

"Impossible," cried she, "impossible, dear Louisa; you must be mistaken."

"Indeed I am not," returned she; an attentive observer can translate the looks of a lover, and is not often mistaken; at least suspend your conclusion against him for a day or two.—I will be answerable for the events."

"Against him!" repeated Miss d'Allenberg;

berg; "his supposed preference of you does credit to his judgment."

"I shall not dispute *that* point with you," answered she, smiling, "because it gratifies my self-love; but here they come, and I only beseech you to open your eyes, and disperse the mist that clouds *your judgment*."

The gentlemen, who had joined in different walks, now approached the ladies, the eyes of Ferdinand meeting those of Miss d'Allenberg's. She blushed excessively, from thinking of the preceding conversation; she turned to Louisa, the archness of whose looks more greatly disconcerted her; her disorder was very visible, which, when Louisa remarked, she drew the attention off from her friend by a sprightly sally, that brought Mr. d'Allenberg upon *her*: He rallied her upon her gaiety, for which he was indebted, he said, to the company of their beaux. This passed off the confusion of his daughter, and she recovered her spirits.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

THE next morning Mr. D'Allenberg and Ferdinand happened to meet in the avenue before the house, where the latter was strolling apparently lost in thought. —

“My good friend,” said the old Gentleman, “I have scarce had an opportunity to speak my perfect satisfaction at the termination of your troubles: I know not indeed all your story, but I know enough to interest me warmly in your happiness.”

“You do me great honour, Sir,” replied Ferdinand; “but though the veil is withdrawn from the mystery, which so long rendered

dered me wretched, yet the disclosure has been attended with the knowledge of so many painful circumstances, that *at times* I feel my spirits sink under the recollection of them."

"Time, and a variety of objects," said Mr. D'Allenberg, will, I hope, by and bye, have its usual effects, and blunt the remembrance of former sorrows. I thank Heaven, there is much alteration in the disorder that affected my daughter's spirits, from the very remedy I prescribe for you; do you not think her complexion and cheerfulness are returning?"

"I hope so," replied Ferdinand, "most fervently I hope it; every one must feel interested for a young lady so *truly* excellent, that the beauty of her person is her least perfection."

"I thank you for the warmth of your sentiments," said Mr. D'Allenberg, "which encourages me to speak freely to you; there is only one man in the world that I am desirous of calling son, *that man is a friend of your's.*"

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"A friend of mine!" repeated Ferdinand, starting in great confusion, adding, in a tremulous voice, "any man must be highly honoured by such a distinction; but I am at a loss to guess who you mean."

"The Count's unfortunate situation sets *him* entirely out of the question," interrupted Mr. D'Allenberg.—"Indeed, Sir! the young Baron's predilection in favour of the Countess is not unknown to you."

"No," returned he, "that's a point settled. The Gentleman I mean has *now*, I believe, neither a prior engagement or attachment, he is one who engaged *my esteem* the first day I saw him, from particular traits of humanity and honour that I observed in him, and from the conversations, short as they were, that gave me a perfect good opinion of his head and his heart. Unfortunate circumstances at that time stepped between me and my wishes, which are now, I believe, all done away. Are you at a loss *now* to know *my man*?"

During

During this speech Ferdinand had been violently agitated; at the conclusion he caught the hand of Mr. D'Allenberg: "Ah! Sir, how flattering is your kindness; I will not affect to misunderstand you, but can that happy distinguished man presume to hope Miss D'Allenberg views him with the partial eyes of her father? No, he cannot, he dares not, flatter himself with an idea, his own observation convinces him would be erroneous."

"You would not then *decline* the connexion, should Theresa be more discerning than you are so ready to suppose?"

"*Decline!* dear Sir! to call you father; to contribute to the happiness of your lovely daughter, would indeed be to ensure my own, and render me the most enviable of mankind. Your kindness has dragged a secret forth from the inmost recesses of my heart, and by its palpitation convinces me, *that heart* is entirely engrossed by Miss D'Allenberg."

"Well,"

"Well," said the old Gentleman, infinitely delighted, "you shall not at any rate bear the torture of suspense, you shall speak to her this day, if she sees with her father's eyes, you have nothing to fear. If I am mistaken, and her inclination is not in your favour, I shall be sorry and disappointed; but—you shall ever be the son of my affection."

Ferdinand was so entirely overcome by this kindness, that words were denied to him, and, confused at his emotions, he turned abruptly from him.

The party assembled at breakfast, all seemed gay and happy except the two lovers. After the repast Mr. D'Allenberg asked the Ladies and Ferdinand to view a small pavilion the Count's steward had lately erected in a beautiful shrubbery.—The name of a pavilion caused his daughter to shudder.—She remembered a conversation which had passed in a similar place that had given her the most poignant grief; but no objection being

Being made, they readily accompanied him, and were highly pleased with the steward's taste.

"There is another spot, not far off," said Mr. D'Allenberg, "where a small building may be erected to an advantage. Come hither, Louisa, I will have *your* opinion *first*." She started up, took his arm, and they were out of sight in a moment.

Miss D'Allenberg was rooted to her seat in breathless terror; Ferdinand was little less discomposed, but recovering himself—"I know not, Madam, whether you will have the goodness to pardon my temerity in seizing this opportunity of opening to you my whole heart, a heart long tortured by the most painful events.

"Ever since I had the honour of knowing Miss D'Allenberg I have considered her as the most amiable of women, and respected her accordingly. My unhappy situation precluded every selfish wish, and *her* happiness was my first concern, independent of my own.

"That the world has hitherto denied to me."

“That situation is now changed, and though perhaps I may err against the common rules of decorum, yet I hope Miss D’Allenberg will not condemn me if I am solicitous to know whether my future destiny is to be happy or wretched; if my kind stars ordain the former, then my anxiety is removed; if on the contrary *I am* to be unfortunate, the sooner I fly from hence the better.”

“Need I add, Madam, that *you* are the arbitress of that destiny, that on *you* must rest all my hopes of future bliss? If you will deign to admit me a candidate for your favour, if no happier man has superseded me, and rendered all my hopes of felicity unsuccessful, if you will permit me to dedicate *my* future life to the delightful study of rendering *your’s* happy, then indeed I may congratulate myself on being the most fortunate of mankind; the wounds which have been given by the hands of those I loved and trusted, and which yet rankle in my bosom, *you* only can heal, and from *you* I would derive that peace which the world has hitherto denied to me.”

Whilst

Whilst Ferdinand was speaking with an earnestness and solemnity in his manner that was truly touching, Miss D'Allenberg had time to recall her fleeting spirits, and compose her mind sufficiently to answer him, tho' not without some emotion.

"This address, Sir, is so unexpected, so opposite to the idea that I had entertained of your sentiments, that surprise has no small share in my too visible emotions; the love of candour, and a strict adherence to truth, were the first lessons I received from the best of mothers: Her precepts and example have governed every action of my life, I will therefore frankly confess."—She stopped.

"Ah! Madam, speak, go on, keep me not in suspense."

"I scarce know what I ought to say, yet I *will* confess, such is my esteem for your character, that I am persuaded, if I have really the power of contributing to *your* happiness, I cannot fail of insuring *my own*."

The

"The moment she had pronounced the last words, Ferdinand threw himself on his knee, and kissed her hand:—"Forgive me," was all he could utter. She raised him, and for a moment both were silent.

"Your generous frankness, my dear Miss D'Allenberg, has overwhelmed me with rapture; my future life must speak my gratitude; joy is not eloquent when so complete as mine."

She arose—"If you please we will seek my father."—He took her hand, and obeyed in silence. They saw Mr. D'Allenberg and Louisa advancing.

"Heyday!" said the latter, "what are you both speechless? Have you exhausted all your stock of ideas, that not a single word is left to ask our opinion of the intended plan for building?"

"You are malicious, Louisa," returned her friend, blushing.

"Sorrow, my dear Madam," answered Ferdinand, "often makes people plaintive, and the overcharged heart sometimes finds relief

relief in complaining; but joy is a miser, and I feel at present too happy to be communicative."

"Extremely well explained, I must own," said Louisa, "a few words has done the business. Come, my silent friend, *you* shall give me *your* opinion of our judgment."—Saying this she drew Miss d'Allenberg away, leaving her father and Ferdinand together. The latter instantly embraced Mr. d'Allenberg. "I am the happiest of men!"

"*One only of the happiest,*" replied he, returning the embrace, "for I share with you."

The party did not meet together till the dinner hour, but Mr. d'Allenberg had seized an opportunity to inform Count M—— and the young Baron of the completion of his wishes, and they very sincerely rejoiced in the promised happiness of Ferdinand.

At table Louisa was the most talkative of the company.—"I cannot help remarking, with an infinity of pleasure," said the Count,

"on the agreeable change there is in your health and spirits, Madam."

"I am sure," answered she, "the intention of your remark is friendly, but not at all calculated to increase my cheerfulness, by reminding me of the alteration. Retrospections are not always pleasing, and I owe much of my health and spirits to a resolution henceforth to look forwards."

"I beg your pardon, my dear Madam," returned he, very seriously, "your reproof is very just, and I take shame to myself for the rudeness of my observation, which I entreat you to believe arose entirely from the real delight I felt in the charms of your conversation."

"It must be owned," said she, with a returning smile, "that you know how to extricate yourself from an error extremely well, and my self-love accepts of the apology."

They had scarcely dined when an express came from Ernest with letters to Ferdinand. He retired to read them, and was surprised

to find one from the steward of the Castle of Danhaet, with information, that "two days after his departure, the hermit had called there for his customary allowance, and informed him, that he had been alarmed the preceding day by seeing some men come out of one of the caves in the rock ; he was not discovered himself, but he supposed they were some proscribed persons, or banditti.

"This intelligence," continued the steward, "I instantly conveyed to the Magistrates, who sent a party of men that same night to the rocks, and they remained concealed in the hermit's cave to make their observations.

"About midnight a boat was seen advancing to the Beach ; two men landed, and were presently out of sight, but in less than half an hour returned with four others, all well loaded. As they proceeded towards the boat, the guards silently issued from the cave, and were upon them before they were discerned. They threw down their booty, and attempted to fly ; one fired a pistol ; the fire

was returned ; in the same moment two fell, and they were surrounded, taken, and conveyed to Lintz.

“ The two wounded were not in much danger. One of them, who was most hurt, proved to be the villain, who had imposed upon Ferdinand.

“ Several robberies and frauds were proved against them, and they had property to a great amount. Amongst the rest, a casket of jewels, which they had defrauded a Lady of, and seduced her from Vienna, where they oftentimes went as Gentlemen, to obtain a knowledge of what travellers were going on the road.

“ They had formerly dwelt in the caves under the hills ; but hearing the foolish story that the pavilion was haunted, they availed themselves of it, to get possession there, and securing all the doors and windows so as to prevent a surprise, fixing a bell at the little area door, that, should any one attempt it, the persons below by groans might frighten,
and

and impose on the credulity of the peasants, as the gang only came there at night, and had a watch word."

This confession was made by the same villain who had before applied at the Castle, and the same cowardly spirit, generally attendant on roguery, had now induced him to make a complete discovery to save his life.

He was not of the party when they took the jewels from the Lady, but had heard she had brought them from Turkey. What became of her after they had stripped her on the mountains, none of them could tell.

The steward concluded, by saying, that "there was little doubt but that they would all suffer for their crimes; the property remained in the hands of the Magistrates to be claimed."

This letter gave Ferdinand further occasion to admire at the justice of Providence, which sooner or later brings villany to its deserved punishment; for

"Foul deeds will rise,

"Tho' all the earth o'erwhelms them, to mens eyes."

He had not the smallest doubt but that Fatima was the Lady from whom they had taken the jewels, and the two Gentlemen, with whom she embarked from Pratt's-Grove at Vienna, two of this abandoned gang of ruffians, though he lamented the depravity of her heart, and detested the baseness of her character, he saw a severe retribution had overtaken her, and therefore felt an anxiety, mixed with compassion, for the uncertain fate of one who claimed her being from his, more than ever, revered father.

He could not bear to reflect on the conduct of Rhodophil; a regular course of duplicity, instigated by the vilest passions, had pervaded through his whole life, and when he considered how greatly his own senses and reason had been imposed upon by his artful management, when he found that even his father had been the dupe of a profound dissimulation, difficult to be conceived in the heart of man. He sighed for the late unhappy Claudina, who had fallen a victim to the same complicated baseness.

Nursed

Nursed in vice and dissipation, the seeds of virtue were never nourished in her bosom, and the wretch, to whose care she had fallen at an early age, had doubtless taught her but one lesson, "to make the most of her beauty;" yet it is certain (thought he) that she loved me; that she bore adversity with sweetness and patience, and but for the insidious arts of a cruel spoiler, the dormant passions, which accelerated her ruin, for gaiety and dress, might have been buried in the duties of a wife and mother:

But a weak mind, and the taint of early dissipation, aided the work of a cruel enemy; and the progressive vice that marked *his* conduct, led him at last to the commission of the most horrid crimes.

From those dreadful objects he turned his eyes to contemplate and admire the exemplary conduct of his amiable friends, and most fervently offered his prayers to Heaven, that they might enjoy the happiness their virtues so well deserved; to those friends he returned,

and communicated the contents of the letter he had received.

No one could be sorry that such a nest of villains were on the point of being extirminated; but Ferdinand could never prevail upon himself to charge his brother with the affaffination he met with, nor the heinous crime which had led to it; those two particular atrocities he forebore to mention even to his best friends; he left them always to suppose he was only attacked in common with other passengers.

A week was spent at the Count's in all the delights of love and friendship, in which time the Ladies heard from the Countess, that "she had found no difficulty in having her affairs settled, no one had doubted her rights, nor any other claim seemed to be remembered; she hoped therefore, in less than a month, to join them at Mr. d'Allenberg's mansion."

The party now prepared to separate; the Baron to his father's Castle for a short time, having received an invitation to meet
his

his beloved Countess; Mr. d'Allenberg, with his daughter and Louisa, to their own house; and the Count returning with Ferdinand, his affairs requiring his presence at Castle Renaud.

He found it extremely difficult to tear himself from his charming Theresa, but she pleaded delicacy and decorum. The recent death of his wife and brother, though separated from the one, and ill-treated by the other, had some claims to observance.

"I am far," said she, "from being a slave to forms, but the good opinion of the world is always worth preserving, and the sacrifice of one's inclinations for a short time, will be much less painful, than a consciousness of having forfeited that opinion by an appearance of *indecorum*; therefore, until our friends join us, you must not be offended if you are excluded from being an inmate of our house."

Ferdinand turned to Louisa, "Hasten the journey of your sweet Countess, my dear friend; the Baron will feel the attraction, and
L 5
my

my time of probation will be shortened." — She nodded an assenting smile; but the remainder of the day passed not like the former ones; they knew they were to separate, and the idea threw a cloud over every countenance.

The next morning they parted different ways, for Miss d'Allenberg would not permit the Gentlemen to accompany them a step out of their road.—“Why should we prolong the pain we feel in separating?” said she; “Let the moment be short and decided; one adieu conveys the same meaning as a thousand. They submitted reluctantly to her wishes, and left the house immediately.

The Count had not heard from Eugenia since his return; he was uneasy at it, and had written to her the preceding day. Francis, their old attendant at the Solitary Castle, lived happy and contented under the protection of Mr. Duclos, the Count's steward, and blessed the day that brought Ferdinand to that desolate mansion.

The

The two friends arrived in safety at Castle Renaud, where the good and faithful Ernest was ready to receive them, accompanied by his nephew and little Charles. The Count was charmed with the sweet boy, and when he admired his features, thought Ferdinand perfectly acquitted for his strong attachment to his mother.

They had been three days at the Castle, when one evening Ferdinand was informed that a woman, of a very ordinary appearance, wished to speak with him; the Count would have withdrawn: — “By no means,” said Ferdinand, and ordered her admittance. — She entered, wrapped in a long cloak, and her head so covered that no part of her face was visible but her eyes.

“What is your business?” demanded he.

“Justice!” replied she, fiercely, and throwing off her hood, discovered Fatima.

“Fatima!” exclaimed he.

“No longer Fatima,” said she, “but Charlotte, daughter to the late Count Renaud,

and as such entitled to be provided for by his heir."

Her astonishing assurance for a moment disconcerted both Gentlemen; but Ferdinand recovering, and looking on her with some indignation:

"The provision you so rudely demand was once *offered*, when I was less able to serve you, myself *then* supported by the bounty of a friend; but you will remember it was offered to you *conditionally*. Your birth does *not entitle* you to make any *demands* upon me; but the respect I owe to the memory of my father will incline me to do it, if you deserve it."

"I scorn the idea of an obligation," said she, "I come to claim my *right*, and to tell you, that secure as you think yourself of the title and estates you have taken possession of, I can annihilate *your* claims in a moment, if you dispute *mine*."

"Charlotte, since that is your name, do not injure yourself by an insolent asperity
that

that ill becomes you : I am inclined to serve you, but it must be in my own manner, nothing shall be extorted from me."

" And I *disdain* a favour," said she : —

" *Know then*, your father was *married* to my mother, consequently neither the late Rhodophil or yourself were entitled to inherit."

" This is so wild a chimera," said Ferdinand, " that I know not which to admire most, the impudence or the falsehood of the assertion."

" You shall find," returned she, " that it is a decided truth ; I have two witnesses to prove the marriage, and shall immediately enter a process against you, unless you consent to give me a moiety of your fortune,"

" And pray," asked Ferdinand, with a disdainful smile, " who, and where are your witnesses ?"

" They are in Baden, and without you accede quietly to my proposal, to-morrow shall witness the publication of my claims, your father's memory shall be branded as it deserves,

serves, and you, *you* shall be known as the child of disgrace, assuming rank and title, to which you have no pretensions."

Never was astonishment equal to the Count's, or perturbation of spirits like Ferdinand's—that this fabricated story was an impudent forgery he had no doubt, and he was well assured could not be maintained; but then she was capable of promulgating the falsehood through the town, his father's memory would be branded by a hundred malicious tongues that delight in a tale of scandal; if in revenge she instituted a suit, he must appear to controvert her assertions, and in the mean time hold only a doubtful title, and a disputed estate.

Whilst he was silently revolving in his mind those perplexities, the Count was considering how to undermine this plot against the interest of his friend.

"I think," said he, mildly, "if this Lady has the proofs she speaks of, it will be much more for your interest and honour to com-
promise

promise the affair between you, than to enter into a tedious process, that in the end must injure both; I would advise you, my friend, to deal cautiously, hear the witnesses, and, if you cannot disprove their testimony, then settle the business amicably between you. — The Lady can claim neither the title nor family estate, she may injure *you* by *her* claims, and throw both into another branch of the family, but she would be no gainer by that; supposing therefore her story to be just, it is for your mutual interest that it should not transpire beyond ourselves.”

Whilst the Count was speaking, Ferdinand looked at him with the utmost surprise, but a turn in his eye undeceived him in a moment; therefore when he ended his observations, the other seemed to be considering, and at length, with an air of reluctance, replied, “Your counsel is difficult to follow, yet you are my only friend, and as such best entitled to advise me.”

“ Well,

“ Well, then, Madam, bring your witnesses to-morrow morning, I only request that till you have produced your proofs, and have my answer, you will not divulge to any one what you have said here.”

“ I do promise (said she) and will attend you to-morrow, when you will find it most for your advantage to pay attention to my demands, and the advice of your friend.” — She then withdrew.

“ This is the most impudent, ill-concerted scheme I ever heard of (said the Count.) — This woman knowing how tenderly you regard the reputation of your late father, has founded her plot upon your weakness : Now let us instantly send to Baden for officers of justice to be here at an early hour, and, my life for it, we shall frighten them into a confession, be the witnesses who they may.”

Ferdinand was compelled to adopt this plan, though it did not exactly correspond with his inclination. This woman was the child of his father, as such he could have wished

wished to save her from disgrace, and have made her life comfortable; but she insisted upon rights which his duty to himself and his heirs would not permit him to allow of.

He passed a sleepless night.—“Foolish mortals as we are (said he) when pluming ourselves in a fancied security of happiness! here is a blow, which, if persisted in, must at least interrupt, if not annihilate all my hopes of future felicity with Miss d’Alenberg; for no compromise will I make, or enjoy a doubtful title to which I have no claim.—“Ah! (cried he) the sins of the fathers are multiplied upon their children!” What a lesson to parents, what a pharos to the gay and dissipated of both sexes, when their crimes and follies are thus extended to their wretched posterity.”

The morning came; he arose languid and unhappy; in vain the Count sought to disperse his gloomy ideas; every way he turned his thoughts, they were pregnant with trouble and vexation.

The

The officers came; they were placed in a closet adjoining to the room in which Ferdinand prepared to receive Fatima, or rather Charlotte. In a short time two women and a man were announced, one of whom proved to be Dupree, the man was unknown.

"How! (exclaimed Ferdinand) Dupree!"

"Yes (said she) Dupree. 'Till lately I knew not that your sister was alive, and therefore, for poor Claudina's sake, I was entirely silent on a subject that must have injured you, without benefitting any one I know; but having accidentally discovered Charlotte, justice now compels me to speak."

"You lived then with Charlotte's mother?" asked the Count; for the sight of Dupree had recalled such a train of unpleasant ideas to Ferdinand, that he could not speak.

"Yes (replied she) before the Count paid his addresses to her. He finding *she was virtuous*, and above all his offers, at length determined to marry her unknown to his father,

father, exactly (said she, addressing Ferdinand) as *you* proceeded with respect to *Claudina*. This Gentleman, Mr. Keilheim and myself, were the witnesses to the marriage, which was private in her own house."

"Who was the priest?" demanded the Count.

"Mr. Reinheim, of Baden, who died soon after Charlotte was born, which gave the Count courage to comply with his father's commands, and marry the mother of Rhodophil. He represented to my poor mistress that a discovery of her marriage would ruin him, as he had no fortune to support her; but that, if she would be content to live as she had done, and permit him to marry, she would always be conscious of her own innocence, always enjoy his love, and he would make ample provision for her children.

"She foolishly consented rather than injure the man she loved. He married a wife he never liked, and was constant in his love to my mistress, 'till unluckily, Ferdinand's
mother

mother came a visiting to his house, he then fell in love with her, and basely used both wives.

“ My mistress sent for him, and threatened to disclose the marriage. He laughed at her, the priest was dead, she had consented to appear as his mistress, his present wife had powerful friends, and every one would be convinced her claim was only founded on malice and revenge; he therefore defied her power.”

“ Just at this time a young Nobleman, high in the army, whom I shall name by and bye, who was distractedly in love with my mistress, made her the most liberal proposals of a good settlement. She, in a fit of passion and resentment, accepted his offers, and left Baden with him, though she sent word to the Count she would always hold a rod over him, and some day or other prove the rights of her child.

“ With this Nobleman she resided till his death, and Claudina was his daughter. They
lived

lived very expensive, and she had no great matter left to support her children, which I believe broke her heart, for she died soon after him, leaving her daughters to the care of Mr. Keilheim and myself.

“ We did what we could for them, but found it would be necessary for them to do something to maintain themselves, or that we must apply to their relations.

“ We were consulting about coming to Baden, and proving the rights of Charlotte, when she foolishly eloped from us with an officer, and followed him to the camp. A battle followed soon after, he was killed, and we could gain no intelligence of her. Mr. Keilheim went to England with a friend on particular business, and advised me to go to Suabia with Claudina, and make her known to her father's brother, who would doubtless provide for her. I took the journey, and came to the Nobleman's house; to my great vexation he had been gone abroad above three years, and nobody knew if he was alive or dead:

“ What

“What was this Nobleman’s name?” demanded the Count, much agitated.

“Count M—— (replied she.) I believe *you know him.*

“Good God! (exclaimed he) but go on.”

“Well (said she) after abundance of inquiries, I could hear of no relation likely to be of service to Claudina; I therefore took a small house in the suburbs of Baden, to wait for the return of her uncle, and in the hope that her beauty might get her provided for: I also expected the return of Mr. Keilheim, when I intended making myself known to Count Renaud, and demand of him some provision for keeping his secret.

“In a short time after the Count’s sons both fell in love with Claudina. Rhodophil wanted her as a mistress, Ferdinand courted her for a wife, and I learned he was the favourite son; I therefore made no application to the Count on her account; the marriage took place, and Ferdinand was turned out of doors. This vexed me, but I thought time
would

would reconcile the father to his son, so as to provide for him; but he was obstinate, without considering he had done the same thing, and they were reduced to much distress. About this time I heard from Mr. Keilheim that his friend was dead, and had left him some property; that he was ill at Hamburgh, and desired me to come to him. Glad to be no longer a burthen upon Claudina, and willing to save her from the sorrow of parting, I went away without taking leave.

“ I contrived, however, to hear of her, and was rejoiced to learn the Count was dead, Ferdinand and she provided for, and living at the Castle, not then believing Charlotte was alive, I thought myself free from the whole business, and troubled my head no more about them.” This, Gentlemen, is the whole story.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

SHE had repeated every circumstance with such exactitude, and without the least hesitation, there seemed a degree of probability in the story not easily to be controverted, that both the Count and Ferdinand were staggered and confused.

The Count well remembered, that his elder brother was said to have taken a mistress with him from Baden, and he now was struck with the recollection that when he beheld little Charles, the features seemed familiar to him, his was an exact copy of his mother's face, and he had no doubt but she resembled her father.

Turning

Turning to Ferdinand, Claudina then was my brother's child, and *I* have an interest in your sweet boy.

Ferdinand was deeply engaged in revolving Dupré's story. Quickly recollecting himself, said he, "You say, that you left us suddenly to spare Claudina the pain of parting; but was it necessary to *rob* us, to carry off the few valuables we had, and leave us in distress? Was it consistent with your love for her, never to write, or give any account of yourself?"

"What (said the Count) was you robbed?"

"Yes (answered Ferdinand) on rising one morning we found the door on the latch, and the drawers emptied."

"I know nothing of that (said Dupré) I cannot answer for any person's getting into the house after I left it."

"*But you shall answer for it* (cried the Count, with joy dancing in his eyes.) Within there! The officers entered, and instantly seized all

three. Ferdinand then spoke:—"I charge *you*, Dupréé, with robbing me, with entering into a vile conspiracy against me, and these persons as your accomplices.

"You shall instantly go to prison, and remain confined on my charges, till I have discovered the whole of your vile plot, which will not be long first (added the Count.) — There is a Gentleman in Baden, you little think of, who will witness to your frauds."

This last speech threw the man and woman into great confusion, though merely an impromptu of the moment.

"For *you* (said Ferdinand to Fatima) — whatever is your name, base, unprincipled woman; foolish as wicked; by gentleness and contrition for your errors, I may say crimes, you might have obtained from me a comfortable provision for life; by fabricating this compilation of falsehoods, by joining with this worthless pair, whose abandoned principles early sowed the seeds of corruption in *your* mind, you have entirely shut my heart against

against you, and the robbery you committed on Heli will prove the depravity of your mind.

The valet of Count Wolfran now lives with a friend of mine. The villains who robbed you of the diamonds which you plundered from your benefactor, they are now in custody, and soon will your story come before the public, as Heli has instituted a criminal process against you.

That name I have been so solicitous to save from the disgrace of giving birth to a wretch like you, can no longer be injured, for such a mother may be supposed to have given many fathers to her children, and any depositions from such infamous persons can only be treated with contempt. Officers take them to prison.

Fatima stood with a sullen intrepidity that both shocked and surprised them. The man changed colour, and was silent, not a syllable had he spoken; but when the officer led Duprécé to the door, that cowardice gene-

rally attendant on a conviction of crimes, at once took from her all the courage she had assumed. "Stop, stop," she cried, and falling on her knees, "Save me from a prison, preserve me from punishment, and I will confess all."

That moment Fatima, who stood near her, snatched a dagger from her side, and as quick as thought stabbed Dupréé, and then plunged it into her own bosom; both fell. The action was so sudden, so unexpected, that no one was in time to prevent her.

Ferdinand was inexpressibly alarmed; he ran to her, as the Count did to Dupréé: — "Rash, unhappy Fatima! what have you done? Let some one fly for a surgeon."

"*He is at hand,*" said she, faintly, "death will soon preserve me from the shame of detection and punishment; that abandoned wretch is the cause of this, she suggested the scheme to ruin you. I lived long enough in Turkey to learn the use of a dagger."

"Wretched

"Wretched girl!" said Ferdinand, agitated by this scene, "why did you doubt my mercy, or generosity?"

"Because I scorned to humble myself, or sue for favours."

"Heli, you, and all are revenged, and I am beyond your power."—These were the last words she spoke; in a few minutes all was over!

Ferdinand, agitated in the most dreadful manner, accused himself for rashly irritating such a mind as her's, and was exceedingly shocked at so dreadful a catastrophe to the life of an unprincipled woman.

Dupré's wound did not appear to be so dangerous, the blood was stopped, and she was taken to another room; the man was detained in custody in the house for the present. The surgeon came, and examined the wound; it was a doubtful case, he said, and could not as yet be decided upon. After it was dressed, she desired to see Ferdinand and the Count.

“ I may now (said she) confess the truth ; the story of the marriage *was false*. My mistress left a good sum of money behind her. Keilheim is my brother : We lived upon it while it lasted, but he gambled a good deal, and it soon went. I had intended to make a good price of Charlotte, but she disposed of herself, and I had only a trifle ; then I determined to apply to Count M—, who really is uncle, by the father, to your late wife ; but he was abroad.

“ Keilheim went as a valet de chambre to an English Gentleman, and left me what he could. I settled at Baden, and had an intention of applying to Count Renaud, and passing Claudina upon *him* as *his daughter*, by saying she was older than she was ; but then I feared he might take her from me to provide for her, and I should only get a trifle, as I know he never liked me ; therefore I thought the only way was to sell her for a good price. You fell in love with her ; I had other offers which I wanted her to accept ;

cept; but she loved you, thought as you would marry her she might one day have a title, and a fortune; the rest you know.

“ I heard from my brother; his master was dead, and he had *secured* to himself all his effects. He was returned to Ratisbon, and proposed I should come and live with him, as he had opened a gambling-house. I *did* take from you—all I could, and went to him.

“ One day, going through the streets, a short time since, I passed a young woman, who seemed to look earnestly at me, and presently pronounced my name; I turned, it was Charlotte.

“ Overjoyed at meeting, I took her home. She there told me her whole story of being carried to Turkey, meeting with you, returning to Vienna, and being carried off from the Turk by a Count, who was killed by Heli; upon which she fled from him with a box of jewels the *Count had given* to her.—She intended to go to England, but crossing

some mountains she was set upon by ruffians, and robbed of all her property, and had travelled on to Ratibon, by the little trifle left in her pocket. In this city she that day arrived with a design to make the most of her beauty, with an Englishman if possible, and then leave Germany.

“ Keilheim had been unlucky at play; we were something distressed; the kindness you had shewn to Charlotte made me believe it easy to impose upon you. We set an inquiry on foot about you, heard that Claudina and your brother were dead; we then formed this scheme, which has turned out so fatal to Charlotte, and, I fear, to myself.”

This confession was made at intervals, as she had power to speak, and amazed the Gentlemen at such a regular system of vice as those wretches had long pursued; but Providence had at length overtaken them, nor would suffer the innocent to be a victim to such abominable duplicity.

In

In vain may the wicked hope to deceive the virtuous and unsuspecting mind, unobserved and undiscovered; there is a watchful and unerring eye, to whom all their black and artful schemes are laid open, and who, in its own good time, defeats the machinations of the wicked, and brings the offenders to the punishment they deserve.

The wretched Dupré languished three days, and then expired of a mortification.—Keilheim was taken to prison, and being convicted of entering into a conspiracy to injure Ferdinand, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, which happily prevented *him* from extending his crimes in future.

This strange and tumultuous business exceedingly deranged and hurried Ferdinand; the Count had written a detail of it to Mr. D'Allenberg, who was greatly concerned for the anxiety it must have given to his friend; nor was his lovely daughter less affected; she added a postscript to her father's letter that more effectually calmed his spirits, and re-

stored his serenity, than a hundred arguments from the Count on the folly of indulging regret for such a character as Charlotte's.

"I must ever pity her fate (said Ferdinand) deprived by her birth of the precepts and example of a *virtuous* parent, her mind was contaminated before she was of an age to acquire any fixed principles. No father to own, or support her, left, deserted by every connexion, and consigned to the trust of such depraved wretches: Ah! my friend, who can wonder at the excesses that followed, and the ruin that befel two unfortunate young women!

"Let the seducer of innocence but reflect one moment on the crimes he propagates, the destruction he meditates, and the dreadful consequences of his success; let him but reflect on the accumulated sins which may be multiplied on his head by the unfortunate beings he may give existence to; let him but extend his views beyond his own selfish gratifications, and he will shrink with horror
from

from the seduction of innocence, and be himself the guardian of that honour, on which depends the happiness or misery of those unborn !”

“ The Count most readily subscribed to the truth of those observations, but to change the immediate subject that distressed him, he congratulated himself on the connexion he claimed with little Charles.

“ When you marry (said he) I claim him as my companion, nor must you deny me ; Mr. Dunloff shall reside with him ; we shall, I trust, often enjoy each other’s society, and you will judge whether I perform my duty or not.” — Ferdinand could not, without wounding the feelings of his friend, refuse a request so generous and affectionate ; he therefore accepted it in the warmest terms of acknowledgment : “ He shall have two fathers (said he) and hold a divided affection that will gratify us both.”

“ It is time now (added he) that I should perform a duty that both affection and grati-

tude demand. I know it was the intention of my late dear father to have provided handsomely for my worthy Ernest; that trust happily devolves on me: Souls like his are above pecuniary reward, nor does he want it, farther than to have the power of enlarging his benevolent purposes; therefore I must add other gratifications to prove my sense of his worth. He then rang the bell, and requested to speak with Mr. Ernest. The good old man came in, pleasure dancing in every feature to attend the commands of his loved master.

Ferdinand desired he would be seated. — Ernest looked at the Count. He translated the look: "My good friend, pray be seated." He immediately complied. "My dear Ernest (said Ferdinand) the packet Mr. Donloff delivered to me, after the death of my brother, contained little more than he himself acquainted me with, and when I had perused the contents I committed it to the flames, and with it all resentment for past injuries.

"I

" I have forbore from that time to enter on the subject. This Gentleman you know to be the unfortunate Claudina's uncle, I therefore speak freely before him ; it can be attended with no ill consequences now, if I ask you where she resided ? where she died ?"

" In a small house, Sir, on the skirts of the Forest, with a worthy man and woman, who had known better days ; but were reduced to be pensioners to your good father, the late Lord ; it was one of the things that gave me a suspicion against that will, that no mention was made of this worthy pair : I had recollected the sending for the lawyer, and the clerk's being shut up, and my heart presaged that a will, dictated by resentment, would be cancelled or altered."

" The will produced therefore surprised me, because I knew it was the hasty work of a moment. After the funeral I inquired for this clerk ; he had left his master. This confirmed me in my suspicions, but they availed nothing. I once or twice dropped a

hint

hint to the late Count, which I saw alarmed him; I believe he feared and hated me. — Pardon my prolixity, Sir.

“ This worthy couple that I was speaking of, were strangers to every one in the Castle but myself. When Madam Claudina opened her mind to me, and resolved to quit the house, I went there, said it was an unfortunate sick Lady and her child, who wished to remain entirely unknown and unseen. They received her with pleasure; there she lived repentant, and her health soon fell a sacrifice to the remembrance of her errors. The news of your death closed the scene.”

“ And where is this worthy pair at present ?” asked Ferdinand.

“ In the same house, Sir.”

“ Who supports them ?”

“ Their *wants* are *very few*; their little garden and a cow supply the *chief* of them.”

“ And *you the rest*, good and respectable man ! (cried Ferdinand) what a heart is your's ! Kings might envy *your* feelings, for justice and charity preside over them.”

At

At that moment dinner was announced. Ernest arose: "Stop, my *friend*, (said he) this day ends *all other* distinctions between us; my heart swells to imitate your's; henceforth be always near me; teach me by your example to be loved in my youth, and revered in my decline of life, *like you*." Yes, *you* are the *father* of my affections, the friend of my friend," putting his hand into the Count's, who pressed it with both of his; "no longer my steward, but my companion and benefactor."

Ernest, overcome by emotions that swelled to his throat, and almost burst his bosom, had just strength to pull open a button or two, and sunk into a chair:—"Too much, (said he, sobbing) it is too much, this graciousness!" A friendly shower of tears fell down his venerable face, and relieved the oppressed heart; neither of them had dry eyes for the moment.

"Come (said Ferdinand, trying to recover himself) come, the dinner waits, we dine together," taking Ernest by the arm.

"Excuse

"Excuse me, Sir, good Sir excuse me, not to day, I cannot; give me time to recover myself; I cannot *obey* you now."

"Dear Ernest, obedience and command exists no longer between us; I will oblige you now, but from this day we have no separate tables. Within an hour I hope you will join us to drink a health to all our friends."

"I will, I will attend you, Sir (cried he, still sobbing;) but spare me for the present." The friends withdrew.

"I honour you, my dear friend (said the Count) for the deserved kindness you have shewn that good man. Would to Heaven that such instances were more frequent, that virtue, and goodness of heart, should be the only distinguishing mark to exact respect and attention; hereditary honours, when disgraced by improper and disorderly conduct, ought, in my opinion, to be classed far beneath the poorest upright man, whilst principles, and a mind like Ernest's, would grace a diadem."

That

That evening the Count received a letter from Eugenia, who continued in tolerable health and spirits. She much regretted the loss of her friend, the Countess; but loved her too well not to rejoice in *her* opening prospects of happiness, though she was the sufferer.

Two days after Mr. D'Allenberg wrote to them that the Countess was arrived, and that the family party wanted their agreeable society, of which due notice had been sent to Baron Reiberg.

The friends wanted no further persuasions to a visit so gratifying to their wishes; Ernest no longer the steward, but friend of Ferdinand, undertook all necessary arrangements for the reception of a Lady, whose society was to constitute the happiness of his beloved *master*, a name ever dear to his heart.

Ferdinand paid a visit to his sister-in-law, the Countess, entreated her friendship in very sincere terms, saying, "he hoped shortly to bring home a Lady who would feel happy
to

to cultivate her acquaintance."—Her reply was equally affectionate and polite.

He commissioned Ernest to make that family comfortable, who had given an asylum to Claudina. He wrote to the steward of Danfelt Castle, offering him the same situation in his family, if he still was desirous of a change, sending him a handsome present, which, if he preferred remaining at the Castle, he would remit to him annually.

Thus, having settled all the demands of gratitude and civility, with a light heart, and a thousand transporting hopes, he accompanied the Count to Mr. D'Allenberg's.

It is needless to say their arrival was announced to the general satisfaction of the family, and Ferdinand thanked the old Gentleman, with the warmest gratitude, for shortening the time of his probation, and permitting him the happy opportunity of cultivating that esteem his lovely daughter had so generously avowed. In less than a week the young Baron made an addition to their society.

Two

Two months was spent by this agreeable party in all the delights that love and friendship could bestow; and, at the expiration of that time, Mr. D'Allenberg prevailed on his daughter and the Countess to make their lovers happy.—“Enough has been sacrificed to decorum (said he) it is now time to satisfy the demands of a tender attachment; life is short, and I wish to enjoy what remains of it, in the contemplation of my childrens felicity.”

The plea was unanswerable, and Miss D'Allenberg resigned her hand without the smallest reluctance to the happy Ferdinand. On the same day the Baron and the Countess were also united.

Previous to which, that Lady insisted upon disclosing to him the story of Louisa, and her own situation.—“I could not feel happy (said she) to know there was a transaction of such consequence in my life, a secret to my husband, where mutual confidence must be the basis for mutual happiness; it would also be

a treason against Louisa, which I could never forgive myself, not to do justice to a nobleness of mind that has few examples. The Baron was indeed surprised, but having heard the precedent the Countess had set Louisa, when the latter was distressed and unhappy; he said, his admiration was so equally divided between both Ladies, that it was difficult to pronounce where the preference lay."

Ferdinand before his marriage heard from the steward of Danfelt Castle, who gratefully thanked him for his goodness; but said a great alteration had taken place there; his master was reconciled to his Lady after a separation of fifteen years, it being found out by the confession of a servant that the Lady was innocent, and accused only out of revenge; he was therefore now preparing the Castle for their reception. He added, that the robbers, having been convicted by the evidence of several persons, had all suffered death, and the box of jewels was claimed by a Gentleman of Vienna to remit into Turkey.

key.—Thus ended all future concern, either for Heli, or the robbers.

Peter, who had been valet to Rhodophil, who had been privy to most of his bad actions, yet had always felt *gratitude* to Ernest for preserving his life, and to whose information Ernest was often obliged, *him* Ferdinand could not retain in his family, but in the hope that a *grateful* mind could not be ultimately a *bad* one, he settled on him an annuity sufficient to maintain him with comfort, for so long as his conduct should deserve it.

The Gentlemen and their Ladies resided one month with Mr. D'Allenberg after their marriage, and then separated, with a promise of paying each other an annual visit. Louisa, at her own request, remained with Mr. D'Allenberg to supply the place of his daughter.

The Count accompanied Ferdinand and his Lady to Castle Renaud, where the worthy Ernest was presented to the Countess in such flattering terms, that the good creature almost expired

expired with joy.—“ Now (cried he, tears stealing down his face) *now* I have lived to see my master happy; I have lived long enough for *myself*; the remainder of my days must be devoted to the service of *that Master*, whose gracious Providence has defeated the schemes of the wicked, and having punished *one error* in early youth, which was productive of so many evils, has at length purified him to a fulness of joy!

Ferdinand, from the day of his marriage with the charming Theresa, had nothing wherewith to reproach himself, or to interrupt their mutual happiness; he found, in the sweets of that union, that perfect felicity, which must result from a connexion formed on the principles of reason and virtue; whilst, generally speaking, those marriages, contracted contrary to the wishes of parents, influenced chiefly by transient personal charms, and hurried on by rash tumultuous passions, seldom fail to be productive of sorrow, regret and reproach—perhaps of punishment
and

and shame.—We have only to add, that in less than three years after the marriage of Ferdinand, the once unfortunate, but then happy Eugenia, was translated from a state of resignation and piety, to a life of blessed immortality:—From *her* melancholy story may be deduced two observations of equal importance to society ; when a parent exercises an undue authority over his child, and compels her to give a reluctant hand without a heart ; by giving his sanction in the outset to deception and perjury ; he has little to expect but that the consequences will be fatal to her honour and happiness.

A parent has an undoubted right to a negative voice, to *persuade*, to *reason*, and *direct* a young and unexperienced mind ; but to force a child to the altar, from motives of ambition, interest, or to gratify any selfish passions, too generally lays the foundation for that indifference, and neglect of the domestic

ness duties, which terminates in folly, vice, and the ruin of all social happiness.

In the conduct of Baron S——, may be traced the fatal effects of indulging that gloomy misanthropy, which feeds a proud spirit and a callosity of heart, insensible to every feeling but its own gratification, which, when opposed, may lead to the most determined cruelty and revenge.

Count M—— was greatly affected at the death of Eugenia; but by their separation he had been long weaned from that excess of passion he had felt in early life, and which had been productive of so much sorrow to both; his grief had less poignancy than he must otherwise have known, and the society of his friends contributed to restore his peace, though he ever preserved a tender remembrance of his first love.

In less than a twelvemonth after her decease, he offered himself to, and was accepted

cepted by, the amiable Louisa. They had no children, and Charles, the son of Ferdinand, was the worthy successor to the Count's fortune.

The compulsive marriage of Count Renaud, from which originated all the misfortunes that attended himself and his family, and the very rash and imprudent one which Ferdinand contracted, hold out lessons of equal importance to the consideration of parents and children.

But our hero, having been severely punished for the impetuosity and folly which marked his first attachment, found, in his union with Theresa, that unclouded happiness so seldom the lot of mortals.

Sensible of the blessings he received, it was his unremitting endeavour, by rectitude of conduct, by generosity to the deserving, and by benevolence to the unfortunate, to

communicate an equal portion of felicity to all within the circle of his acquaintance.

From the characters of Rhodophil and Fatima, we may trace the progression of vice, and its fatal termination!

"Vice to be hated,

"Needs but to be seen."



FINIS